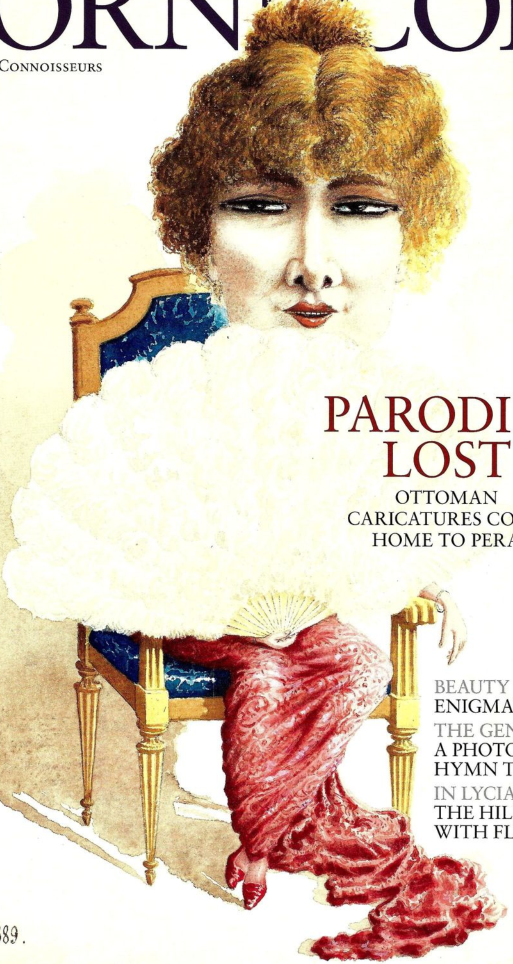
CORNUCOPIA

TURKEY FOR CONNOISSEURS

ISSUE 55 2017


10 Janvier 1889.

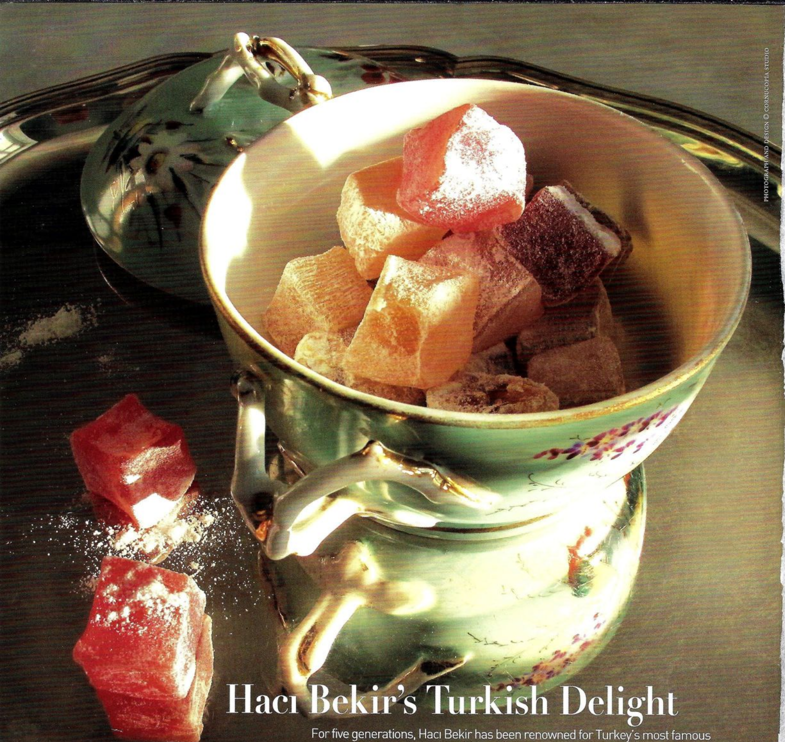
PARODIES LOST

OTTOMAN
CARICATURES COME
HOME TO PERA

BEAUTY AND THE EAST
ENIGMATIC ERZURUM

THE GENTLE EYE
A PHOTOGRAPHER'S
HYMN TO ANATOLIA

IN LYCIAN FIELDS
THE HILLS ARE ALIVE
WITH FLOWERS



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From the exhibition *Yusuf Franko's Characters: An Ottoman Bureaucrat's Caricatures* – page 15

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THE ORIGINAL 'CORNUCOPIA'
The Latin *cornu copiæ* or 'horn of plenty', a horn overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn and a symbol of prosperity and abundance in the cities of Anatolia.

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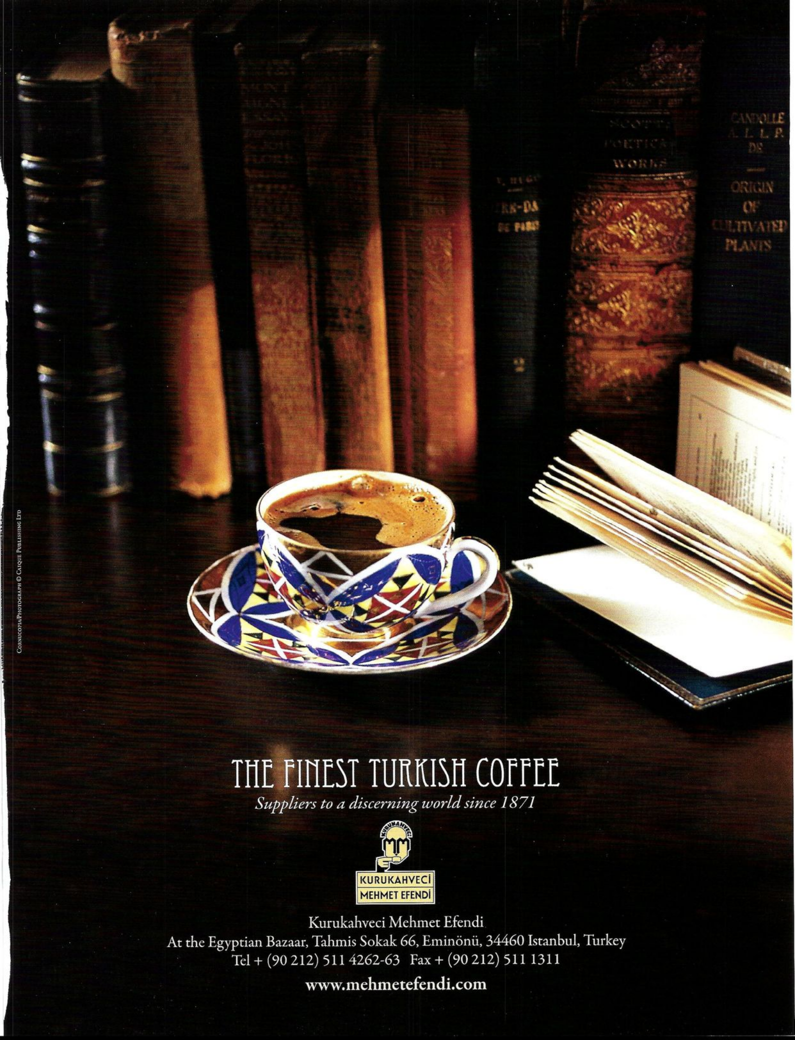
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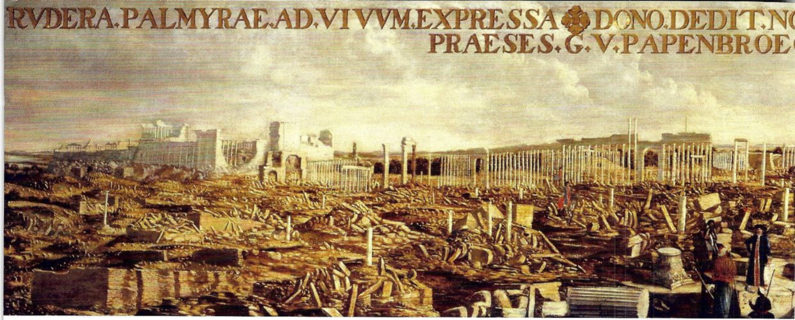
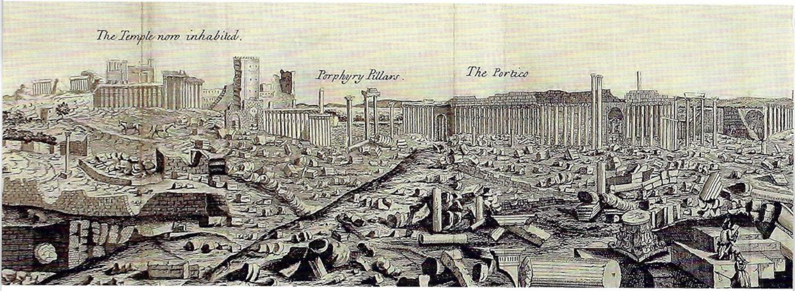
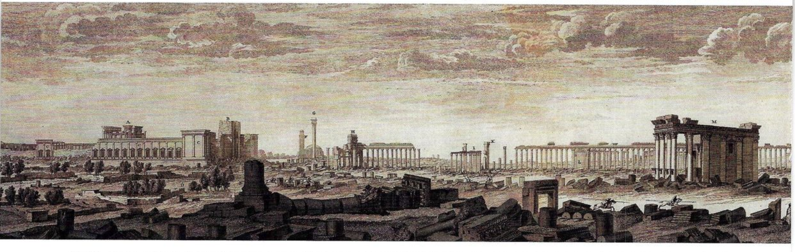

RVDERA.PALMYRAE.AD.VIVVM.EXPRESSA DONO.DEDIT.N
PRAESES.G.V.PAPENBROE

Above Four metres wide, Hofstede van Essen's 1693 oil painting was the West's first view of Palmyra (Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam)

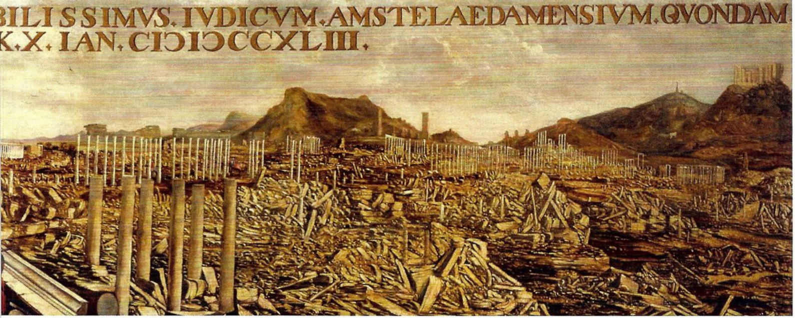

The Temple now inhabited.
Porphyry Pillars.
The Portico

Below This fold-out panorama appeared in Robert 'Palmyra' Wood's book of 1753, 'The Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Tedmor, in the Desart'.



THE DESERT DISCOVERY THAT DELIGHTED

The West first glimpsed Palmyra's majestic ruins when a Dutch painter's panorama of the site in the
inspired the Neoclassical Revival. As violence destroys the 'Venice of the sands', Robert Ousterhout,


BILISSIMVS. IVDICVM. AMSTELAEDAMENSIVM. QVONDAM.
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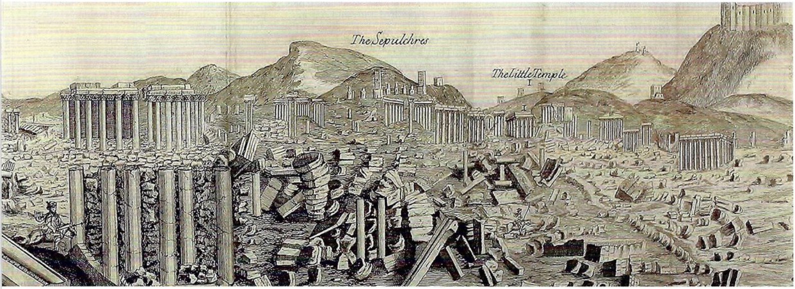
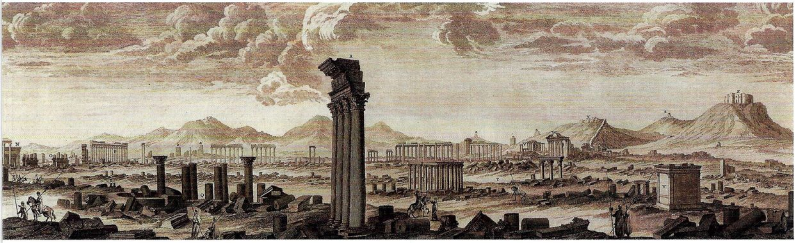
Below Lanoy and Goodyear's 1695 engraving is almost identical, suggesting that they both copied Hofstede's original drawings

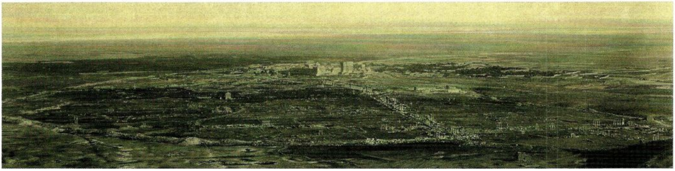

The Sepulchres
The Little Temple

The lavish folio volume made (and changed) its author's name and inspired countless architects with its details of the city's Classical ruins



THE WORLD

Syrian Desert was unveiled in 1693. Now on show in Holland, this is the much-copied view that co-author of a new book on Palmyra, traces how images of the Roman ruins evolved


UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM ARCHIVES

TOP A PANORAMA OF PALMYRA AT DAWN, BY THE AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER AND ARCHAEOLOGIST JOHN HENRY HAYNES, 1885. SEEN FROM THE MEDIEVAL FORT OF QALAAT SHIRKUH, IT LOOKS EAST TOWARDS THE TEMPLE OF BEL, WITH THE GREAT COLONNADE IN FRONT AND THE OASIS BEHIND

> *'Fabulous golden-ochre colonnades... great fields of ruins like a garden of broken daffodils within the long low shattered line of Justinian's wall... [It] is Syrian Graeco-Roman of the more florid period, and has excited, perhaps, a more startled ecstasy in beholders than almost any other of the world's wrecked cities'*
>
> ROSE MACAULAY,
> 'PLEASURE OF RUINS', 1953

Blessed with legendary status and ruins of mythical proportions, Palmyra has long fascinated travellers. The first visually documented visit to the caravan city in the Syrian Desert was made in 1691 by a British merchant party of 30 gentlemen. Among them, Timothy Lanoy and Aaron Goodyear kept travel journals, extracts of which appeared in *Philosophical Transactions* in 1695. Their account was accompanied by a fold-out engraving of the ancient ruins, nearly 70cm wide (pages 4–5, centre). The engraving views the ruins from the south. On the far left is the Temple of Bel (Baal), dedicated in 32AD, reduced to rubble by Islamic State in 2015. On the right, on its hilltop, is the medieval fortress of Qalaat Shirkuh. Other monuments are named, in effect marking the visitors' itinerary. The published engraving vividly brought Palmyra before the eyes of an international audience.

But this was not the oldest illustration. A couple of years earlier, the Dutch consul to Aleppo had sent a large oil-on-canvas panorama of Palmyra to Amsterdam at the request of Gisbert Cuper, mayor of Deventer, an amateur antiquarian and leading Dutch intellectual of his age. Dated 1693, it was signed by Gerard Hofstede van Essen, a little-known Dutch artist based in Aleppo.

More than four metres long, and now the property of the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, the canvas is the centrepiece of an exhibition in Deventer (page 4–5, top). It is virtually identical to the fold-out engraving, and both must have derived from drawings made on site, probably by Hofstede himself.

As painted by Hofstede and published by Lanoy and Goodyear, the panorama was recycled in numerous versions before it was superseded by that of the antiquarian Robert "Palmyra" Wood, who published a folio in 1753, *The Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Tedmor, in the Desart*. But nothing had prepared Wood for the sight that confronted him:

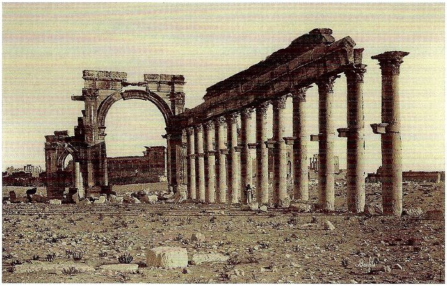
"The hills opening discovered to us, all at once, the greatest quantity of ruins we had ever seen, all of white marble, and beyond them towards the Euphrates a flat waste, as far as the eye would reach... It is scarce possible to imagine anything more striking."

Wood's volume presents two kinds of image of the ruins, prepared by the expedition's draughtsman, Giovanni Baptista Borra. In the measured architectural drawings, presumed lacunae have been filled in and all context removed, while the picturesque views represent (in Wood's words) the "present state of decay".

The exactitude of the Classical Orders and the picturesque nature of the ruins caught the imagination of many and was one of the inspirations for the Neoclassical Revival in architecture in England, Europe and America – encouraged by the architect Borra, who used his own Palmyra drawings for commissions in England and Italy.

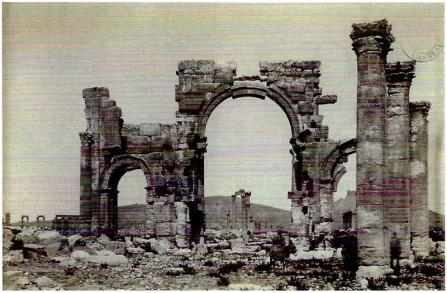
The fashion for panoramas persisted, as did the memory of the Lanoy and Goodyear fold-out. Wood felt obliged to include a fold-out panorama, following the model of *Philosophical Transactions* and, like it, viewed from the south, with the details of the city framed by the Temple of Bel and the Qalaat Shirkuh (pages 4–5, bottom). Wood corrected many of the spatial ambiguities of the older engraving, but he is clearly indebted to it.

By the 19th century, representation of Palmyra in European publications had



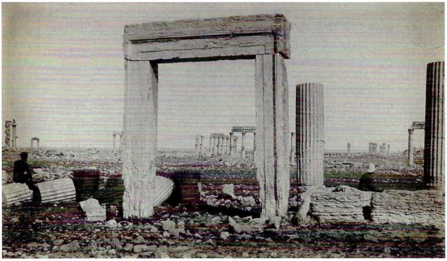
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM ARCHIVES

ABOVE A LONE FIGURE LENDS A TOUCH OF THE ORIENTAL TO FÉLIX BONFILS'S DRAMATIC COMPOSITION OF THE GREAT COLONNADE AND MONUMENTAL ARCH, WHICH DATE FROM THE 2ND CENTURY AD – ONE OF JUST A DOZEN METICULOUS PRINTS HE MADE IN 1867–76



CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

More spontaneous than Bonfils, Haynes shot the arch, relic of Palmyra's golden age, from the opposite viewpoint. In five days he captured more than 100 images of the city. Here a donkey and its rider have obligingly wandered into the frame



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In Haynes's photograph, only the door frame stands at the Temple of Allat. Also built in the 2nd century, it was later enveloped by the Camp of Diocletian. The epigraphist Professor Sterrett (on the right, in pith helmet) ponders the ruins with a companion

solidified round a set of visual clichés: authoritative images that emphasised the heroism of the explorer and suppressed the independent perseverance of a local community. With the advent of photography, this is very much the approach we see in the works of Félix Bonfils (1831–85), a prolific photographer who established a studio in Beirut in 1867. Bonfils's photographs were eagerly acquired by tourists, becoming some of the most familiar views of the people and historic monuments of the Middle East.

When the Americans of the Wolfe Expedition arrived at Palmyra in 1885, the site was well known, but it constituted a detour for their party – and was even the cause of some grumbling by its leader, the Rev William Hays Ward. Nearing the end of their journey, the team had spent the previous months on a reconnaissance mission to Mesopotamia, looking for a suitable site for an American excavation; Palmyra was not related to their Babylonian investigations at all. Nevertheless, John Henry Haynes, the expedition's photographer, had been requested by the Archaeological Institute of America to record the caravan city.

During their five days at the site, Haynes was able to take more than 100 photographs as his travelling companions copied inscriptions. Regarded by many as the father of American archaeological photography, Haynes assembled the most comprehensive early collection of site photographs for Palmyra. The Wolfe Expedition's relative unfamiliarity with the site and the way it had been represented was in some senses an advantage. Haynes's photographs give us a comparatively innocent view of the site, refreshingly free of the standard tropes.

According to Haynes, the amateur Orientalist Ward "cared nothing for Palmyra before coming", but "was delighted with the ample ruins here". In his own journal, Ward expresses his regret at not being better prepared for their visit. In the photographs, Haynes's colleagues seem to ponder the ruins rather than possess them – the atmosphere is contemplative rather than heroic. At the same time, the locals appear as inhabitants of the landscape – as if they belong to it, rather than as props included to suit an Orientalist or colonialist agenda.

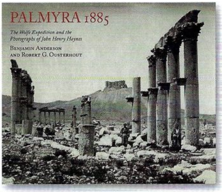
In many ways Haynes's photographs are more accessible, more believable than those of Bonfils. Eschewing standard views of isolated monuments seen from fixed vantage points, Haynes's approach is more discursive – we are allowed to wander with him, to puzzle over the identifications and to marvel at the scenery. Unlike those who created the earlier panoramas, he was content to climb nearby hills for a bird's-eye view.

Haynes's primary interest in photography was documentary – that is, in the service of archaeology – but his many picturesque views of Palmyra capture our attention, and most importantly, make the site accessible to a contemporary viewer.

Recent events have taken a devastating toll on the monuments: the Temples of Bel and Baalshamin, the Monumental Arch, the tower tombs and much figural sculpture were wantonly destroyed by the forces of Islamic State in 2015. As a result, Haynes's photographs are all the more precious. ◆

☐ *'Palmyra, City of a Thousand Pillars' is at the De Waag Museum, Deventer until February 12, 2017; museumdewaag.nl*

☐ *For the full story of Hofstede's painting, see judithweingarten.blogspot.com.tr. Judith Weingarten is the author of 'The Chronicle of Zenobia: The Rebel Queen' (2006)*


PALMYRA 1885
The Wolfe Expedition and the Photographs of John Henry Haynes
Benjamin Anderson and Robert G. Ousterhout

'Palmyra 1885: The Wolfe Expedition and the Photographs of John Henry Haynes', by Benjamin Anderson and Robert G. Ousterhout (Cornucopia 2016) is available from cornucopia.net, price £19.95

MELTING HEARTS

An ambitious new work of classical music – based on Howard Blake's enchanting score for 'The Snowman' – has just received its world premiere. This concert is just one of many achievements by Talent Unlimited, a Turkish charity that gives budding young virtuosi a helping hand.

Tony Barrell tells the story. Photographs: Monica Fritz

Jetting around the globe to perform in the world's most opulent concert halls sounds extremely glamorous. But being a young classical musician entails a lot of graft. Not only do you have to study and practise for many long hours, but you have to promote yourself tirelessly in order to find enough work to make a decent income. Tuition fees and travel make it a shockingly expensive business as well, so it's always good news when young musicians receive support of some kind – as they do from Talent Unlimited.

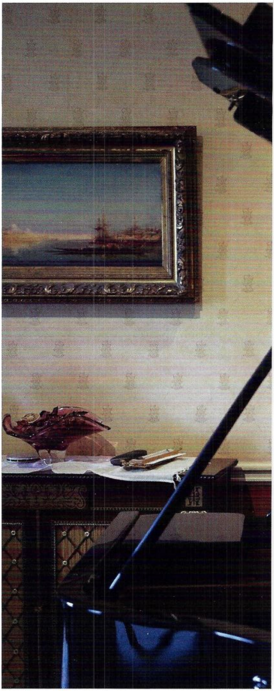
Talent Unlimited (TU), which gained official charity status in 2010, is the brainchild of Canan Maxton, an aficionado of Western classical music who was raised in Istanbul. When I caught up with Canan last summer, she explained that one of the main inspirations for TU came when she was working for other charities. "I was raising funds for them, but I realised that I had absolutely no control over how the money was being spent," she said. She had also become aware that young classical musicians from Turkey were failing to receive financial support. "They get a lot of promises that aren't fulfilled, and they can find themselves in the middle of their studies without any funding. Turkish students, just like other students from non-EU countries, have to pay very high college fees, which might be in the region of £27,000 in the UK – a lot more than in many other countries."

Left Canan Maxton, founder of Talent Unlimited

Canan (pronounced Jah-nan) revealed that her gift for finding talent goes back to her childhood, when she harboured her own musical ambitions. "I realised at the age of 14 that I didn't have the talent to become a good pianist, and decided to abandon the piano." She also abandoned plans to become a choreographer. "I'm delighted that I had the gumption to recognise the level of my ability. This is one of my strong points. I have no difficulty seeing who has real talent, and who is just okay but will do well because he or she is a determined individual. I try to help them according to their ability."

While TU still gives priority to musicians of Turkish origin, it has now taken around 135 young people from 28 countries under its wing. "The charity has a limited fund that it can use in emergencies," said Canan. For instance, it was able to offer financial assistance when one musician lost her passport and bank cards shortly before she was due to travel abroad to a masterclass. It also helps people set up their own websites, which can be a boon for artists looking for opportunities. "Recently one of our musicians received a job offer very soon after her website was completed."

Most importantly, TU reaches out and makes all kinds of connections in the classical world. "We promote our musicians by introducing them to various other organisations who require a musician or an ensemble. We make sure that the musicians get paid a certain amount, as they need this to survive. Obviously, we take no commission from our artists, as we are not agents or managers." Because young players need to be heard by audiences, TU not only collaborates with organisations that put on concerts, but also arranges its own. In September it staged a successful four-day festival at Asia House in London, "Showcasing the Rising Stars of Talent Unlimited", during which audiences sat spellbound as pianists, violinists and



ABOVE THE AWARD-WINNING TEENAGE PIANIST JULIAN TREVELYAN REHEARSES THE 'SNOWMAN RHAPSODY', A 43-MINUTE PIANO EPIC BY HOWARD BLAKE

singers tackled challenging works from the classical repertoire, including pieces by Handel, Tchaikovsky, Liszt and Chopin.

One connection recently made by TU has borne a remarkable fruit. When Canan met the prolific British composer Howard Blake, she asked if he happened to have anything spectacular that one of the charity's young pianists could play. Howard has written for films as diverse as *A Month in the Country*, *The Hunger* and *Flash Gordon*, but he is best known for his score for *The Snowman*. This charming animated film, first shown on British television at Christmas in 1982, was an adaptation of a children's picture book by Raymond Briggs, and later spawned a stage show that still plays to audiences around the world. Howard replied that he did have a piece, funnily enough: a monumental version of *The Snowman* for solo piano. The only trouble was, it was an enormous and tricky piece, about three-quarters of an hour long, and nobody had ever even attempted to play it.

Undaunted, Canan introduced Howard to Julian Trevelyan, an award-winning teenage British pianist, and Julian began exploring this complex work, which lacked an official title until Canan named it the *Snowman Rhapsody*. A suitably grand London venue was booked for the world premiere of the piece – St James's Church in Piccadilly – and the preparations began.

When I met Howard and Julian last summer, the rehearsals were in full swing. "I've been looking at it with Julian and making adjustments, tidying it up and making it a real virtuoso piece," said Howard. Immediately recognisable from the start of the rhapsody is the hit song 'Walking in the Air', which conjures a magical wintry atmosphere with its haunting first six notes. "I wrote that melody back in 1971," said Howard, "when I was walking on a beach in Cornwall." Early attempts to

Above Julian Trevelyan studies the music with its composer, Howard Blake
Right As an eight-year-old boy, Julian played Howard's melodies to a real snowman he had built in his garden

turn it into a symphony failed, "and I didn't know what to do with this melody," but in 1981 he was asked to look at an early demo of *The Snowman*. "And I thought, 'This is where it fits. This is what it was meant for!'"

It seems as if the *Snowman Rhapsody* was destined for Julian, as well. As a child he was captivated by the original film, and there is even a family photograph of him aged eight, playing music from *The Snowman* on viola – his first instrument – to an actual snowman he'd built in the garden. Young Julian had noted the name Howard Blake, but imagined that the composer was as physically unreachable as others in his field, such as Mozart and Beethoven. "I have to admit that I thought that Howard Blake was actually not alive any more," recalled Julian. "So I didn't think I'd ever meet him."

One Thursday evening in November 2016, as the grey sky darkened and swaddled commuters hurried home, a hushed audience gathered in St James's Church, Piccadilly – including Howard Blake himself, who sat by the aisle in the front pew. Outside in Regent Street, before the clocks struck seven, 300,000 of London's Christmas lights were switched on, and shortly afterwards 18-year-old Julian Trevelyan walked towards a gleaming Fazioli grand piano, took a bow and sat down to play. He didn't have a dot of music: he was going to play the whole thing from memory.

The Snowman

PETER TREVELYAN

The next 43 minutes combined power and drama with pathos and humour, as the 29 successive movements of the rhapsody unfolded, including 'Footprints in the Snow', 'The Snowman Comes to Life', and 'Tropical Fruit Calypso', with its witty quotation from the old nursery rhyme 'Oranges and Lemons'. The music brought to mind vivid images from the original film, recalling how the snowman takes his young creator on a magical journey to the Frozen North, where they meet Father Christmas and dance with a crowd of other living snowmen.

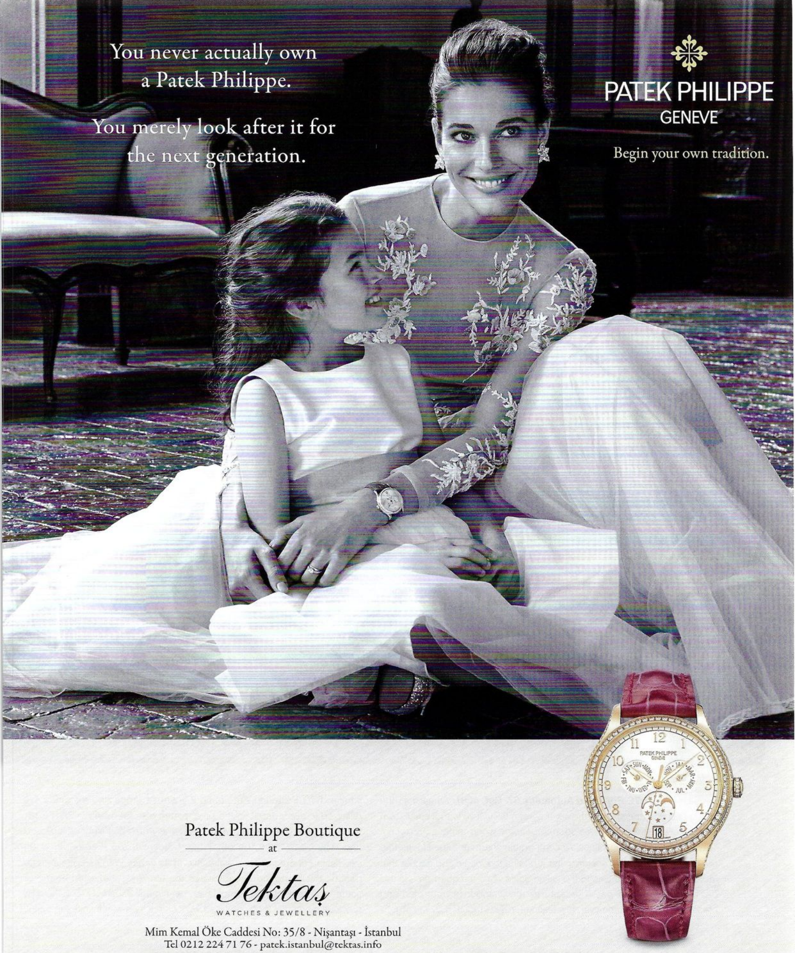
As the echoes of the final notes faded into the rafters, the applause and praise began. "Unbelievable," whispered a woman behind me. "Astonishing," said another. "A remarkable tour de force from a prodigiously gifted young pianist," said an audience member on Facebook.

"What a wonderful concert by this young gentleman," said the Turkish musician AyşeDeniz Gökçin – another TU performer, and no slouch in the virtuoso piano department herself. "I was truly amazed."

More performances of this calibre are surely to be expected as Canan Maxton and Talent Unlimited make further connections in the world of music. Watch this space. ◆

Tony Barrell is a widely published writer and a musician. His latest book is 'Born to Drum: The Truth about the World's Greatest Drummers' (HarperCollins); www.tonybarrell.com

❑ *For more information about Talent Unlimited, visit talent-unlimited.org.uk*



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CONNOISSEUR

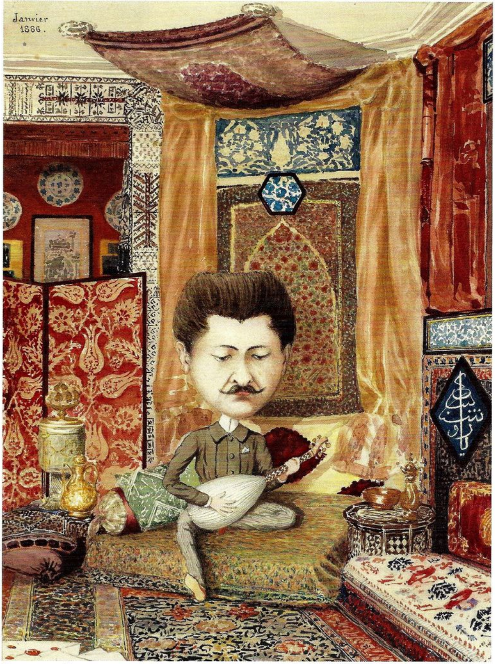
SPOTLIGHT ON ISTANBUL: OTTOMAN HIGH SOCIETY LAMPOONED; THE LIGHT-FILLED CHARM OF FEYHAMAN DURAN; HARD TRUTHS FROM THE BALKANS; FÉLIX ZIEM'S GLOWING BOSPHORUS; MARITIME ART AT ISTANBUL MODERN; STREET DOGS AND THE CITY

PUPPET MASTER OF PERA

YUSUF FRANKO KUSA USED BRUSH AND PEN AND POSITION TO LAMPOON AND PULL THE STRINGS OF OTTOMAN HIGH SOCIETY. UNSEEN FOR 60 YEARS, HIS CARICATURES ARE NOW THE SUBJECT OF A FASCINATING EXHIBITION IN ISTANBUL, WRITES K MEHMET KENTEL

Sixty years ago, a rug dealer in the Grand Bazaar made a lucrative deal with an American diplomat who was on vacation in Istanbul with his wife. What he sold the American was not a rug, nor a carpet, and was quite unlike anything traded before or since in the bazaar or in any Istanbul antique shop. It was an 86-page album of unpublished caricatures from the Ottoman period, all dated to a span of 12 years from 1884 to 1896. That itself made it very interesting – but there was more to this album of curiosity. Titled *Types et Charges*, it was full of exceptionally well-crafted satirical drawings of members of the elite in fin-de-siècle Pera (today's Beyoğlu). The artist himself was an aspiring member of this society with good connections in Ottoman bureaucracy as well as in Pera's business circles. His name was Yusuf Franko Kusa (1856–1933).

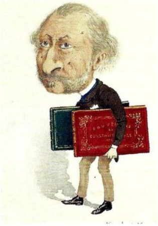
Yusuf Franko was from a Melkite family (belonging to the Greek Catholic Church) who had emigrated from Lebanon at the end of the 18th century. Nasrî Franko, his father, had climbed the ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy,

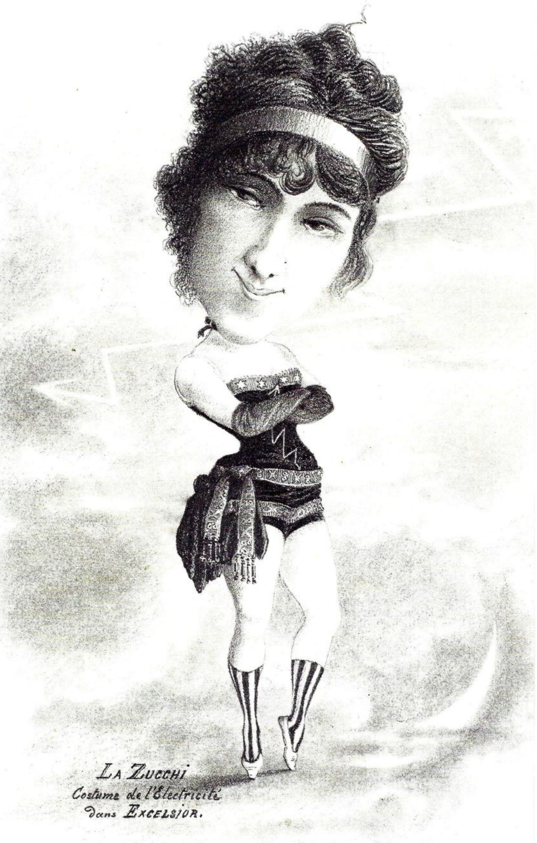


IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION

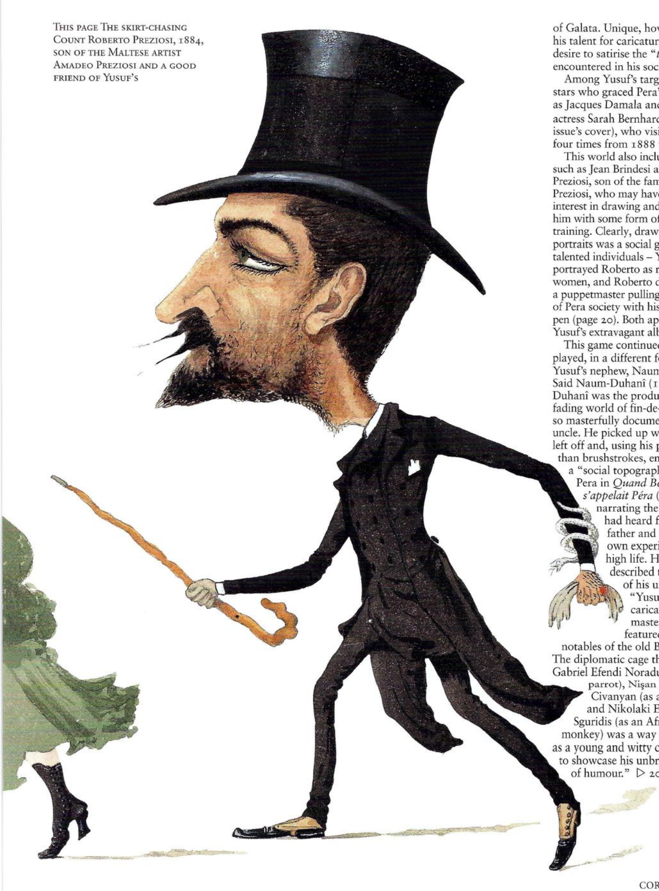
'JAROSJINSKI, SECRETARY AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY, IN HIS ORIENTAL SALON', 1886, IS THE MOST DETAILED OF YUSUF BEY'S 124 WITTY CARICATURES. THE DIPLOMAT WAS A PROTÉGÉ OF THE FRENCH ENVOY'S WIFE eventually finding himself as the *mutasarrıf* (governor) of the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon. His cousin and brother-in-law Naum Pasha Duhanî (1850–1911) was the nephew of Michel Naum, the owner of Pera's famous Naum Theatre. Both Naum and Yusuf held important posts in the Ottoman foreign ministry, and, turning the governance of their ancestral homeland into virtually a family practice, both in turn became *mutasarrıf* of Mount Lebanon. Yusuf's brothers were also diplomats.

Thanks to the roles he played in the busy diplomatic scene and to family connections, Yusuf enjoyed rare access to the private world of Pera's crème de la crème. Among his entourage were ambassadors and chargés d'affaires. As one of them, the French diplomat Gabriel Hanotaux, related, "Youssouf was an amiable man, an excellent despatch writer, a skilled draughtsman, a witty cartoonist, a man about town, an enthusiastic bridge player who used to soundly beat the secretary of the Greek legation." He also enjoyed the company of the most influential figures in Ottoman society and the patronage of two grand viziers, Tevfik Pasha and Said Pasha, as well as the friendship of the Levantine bankers





ABOVE THE FRENCH PAINTER 'MR BRINDIZI' (JEAN BRINDESI) WITH 'SOUVENIRS DE CONSTANTINOPLE', HIS ALBUM OF WATERCOLOURS, 1885
RIGHT VIRGINIA ZUCCHI AS 'ELECTRICITY', 1888. YUSUF MAY HAVE SEEN THE ITALIAN BALLERINA ON A VISIT TO HIS BROTHER FEYZİ BEY FRANKO, CONSUL IN ODESSA



This page The skirt-chasing Count Roberto Preziosi, 1884, son of the Maltese artist Amadeo Preziosi and a good friend of Yusuf's

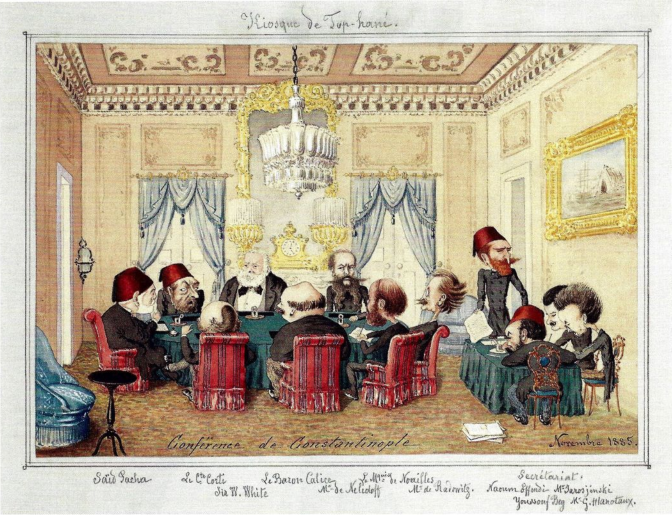
of Galata. Unique, however, was his talent for caricature and his desire to satirise the "*types*" he encountered in his social world.

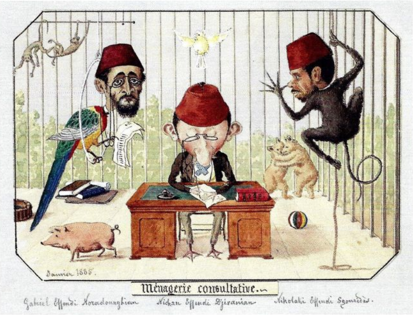
Among Yusuf's targets were the stars who graced Pera's stages, such as Jacques Damala and his wife, the actress Sarah Bernhardt (see this issue's cover), who visited Istanbul four times from 1888 to 1908.

This world also included painters such as Jean Brindesi and Roberto Preziosi, son of the famous Amadeo Preziosi, who may have inspired his interest in drawing and provided him with some form of artistic training. Clearly, drawing satirical portraits was a social game for these talented individuals – Yusuf portrayed Roberto as running after women, and Roberto drew Yusuf as a puppetmaster pulling the strings of Pera society with his brush and pen (page 20). Both appear in Yusuf's extravagant album.

This game continued to be played, in a different format, by Yusuf's nephew, Naum Pasha's son, Said Naum-Duhanî (1892–1970). Duhanî was the product of the fading world of fin-de-siècle Pera so masterfully documented by his uncle. He picked up where Yusuf left off and, using his pen rather than brushstrokes, embarked on a "social topography" of old Pera in *Quand Beyoğlu s'appelait Péra* (1956), narrating the stories he had heard from his father and uncle and his own experiences of this high life. He vividly described the contents of his uncle's album: "Yusuf Bey left a caricature masterpiece that featured all the notables of the old Beyoğlu... The diplomatic cage that included Gabriel Efendi Noradungyan (as a parrot), Nişan Efendi Civanyan (as a macaque), and Nikolaki Efendi Sguridis (as an African monkey) was a way for Yusuf, as a young and witty caricaturist, to showcase his unbridled sense of humour."

▷ 20

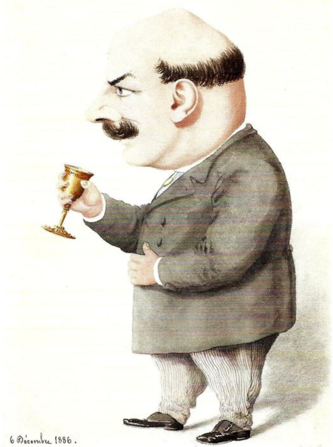

Kiosque de Top-hané.
Conférence de Constantinople
Novembre 1885.
Saïd Pacha
Le Cte Corti
Sir W. White
Le Baron Calice
Mr de Nelidoff
Le Mqis de Noailles
Mr de Radowitz.
Secrétariat.
Naoum Effendi
Mr Jarosjinski
Youssouf Bey
Mr G. Hanotaux.


Janvier 1885.
Ménagerie consultative.–
Gabriel Effendi Noradounghian
Nichan Effendi Djiranian
Nikolaki Effendi Sgouridès.

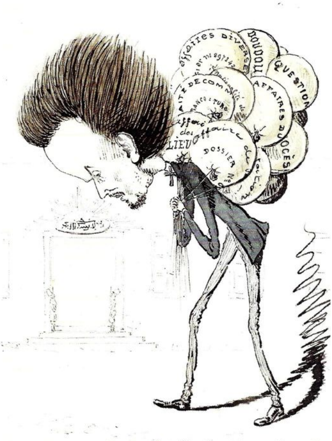
ABOVE THE CONFERENCE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, 1885, PRESIDED OVER BY SAID PASHA (FAR LEFT), ASSEMBLED THE ENVOYS OF THE GREAT POWERS TO SOLVE THE BULGARIAN/EASTERN RUMELIA CRISIS. AT THE SMALLER SECRETARIAT'S TABLE ARE YUSUF (FOREGROUND), HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW NAUM EFENDI (STANDING), AND THEIR FRENCH COLLEAGUES, JAROSJINSKI AND GABRIEL HONATAUX

LEFT 'CONSULTATIVE MÉNAGERIE', 1885, YUSUF'S CAUSTIC VIEW OF THE OTTOMAN LEGAL ADVISERS

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ENVOY, BARON CALICE, HOLDING A CHALICE, 1886; THE FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, GABRIEL HANOTAUX, 1886, A GOOD FRIEND TO NAUM AND YUSUF; BRITAIN'S ENVOY, LORD DUFFERIN, LATER VICEROY OF INDIA, 1884; COUNT CORTI, 1886 – HE WAS TRANSFERRED FROM ISTANBUL TO LONDON



6 Décembre 1886.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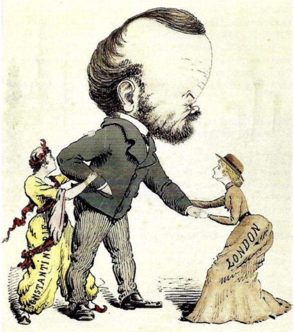
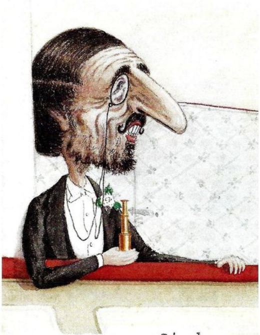
Mars 1886.


CONSTANTINOPLE
LONDON

Un Don Juan diplomatique.

Mai 1886. ★★★



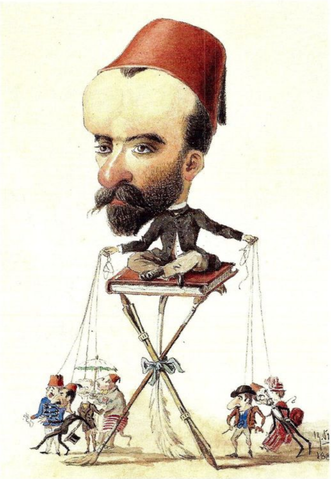
Décembre 1884.

What happened to this album after it was bought in the Grand Bazaar in 1957? It stayed in the hands of the same family for 60 years, never exhibited, never published, acquiring legendary status as it travelled the world with the diplomat and his family, stopping in Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan and Vermont. In 1966, an article in the American arts magazine *Horizon* introduced it to connoisseurs and art historians; the article was translated into Turkish and published in *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* in 1969, the album's debut in the Turkish-speaking world. From then on, sporadic references to Yusuf Franko's work appeared as a footnote to the history of Turkish–Ottoman caricatures.

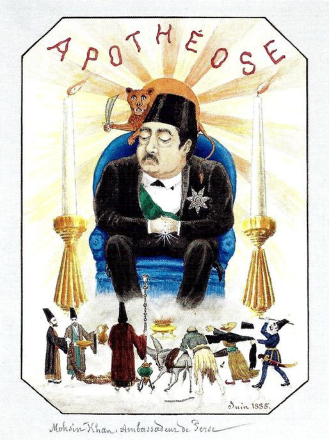
And so it remained until the album was finally found in Toronto, after a brief stopover in Reykjavik, and added to the Ömer M Koç Collection in 2016. Now, 120 years after Yusuf drew his last caricature, the album is making a remarkable return to Pera, the very milieu where it was conceived. Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) is holding an exhibition at its gallery in the heart of Beyoğlu. *Yusuf Franko's Characters: An Ottoman Bureaucrat's Caricatures* tells the exciting story of Yusuf, his album and the world it grew out of. Curated by Bahattin Öztuncay and designed by Yeşim Demir, the exhibition is accompanied by a publication in two volumes; one reproduces the album in its entirety, the other places it in a social and artistic context.

The historian Robert Darnton once suggested that the key to understanding the culture of an ancient or alien people was to explore what they laughed at. Now it's our turn to laugh, and we are invited by Yusuf to play his game.

K Mehmet Kentel is head librarian at ANAMED, Istanbul; mkentel@ku.edu.tr



ABOVE 'MA CHARGE PAR LE COMTE PRÉZIOSI', ROBERTO PREZIOSI'S 1884 CARICATURE OF YUSUF AS THE PUPPETMASTER PULLING THE STRINGS OF PERA SOCIETY, BOTH OTTOMAN AND EUROPEAN

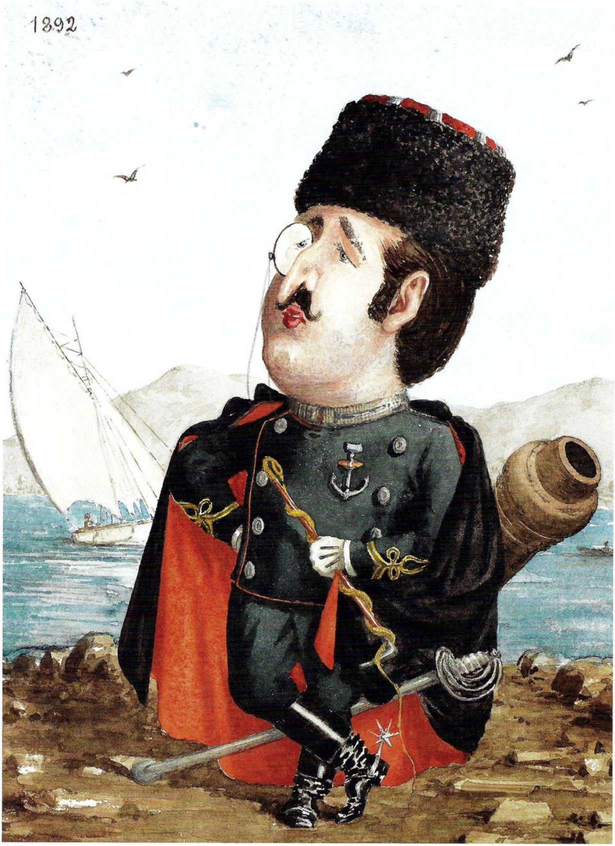

APOTHEOSE
Juin 1885.
Mohsin Khan, Ambassadeur de Perse

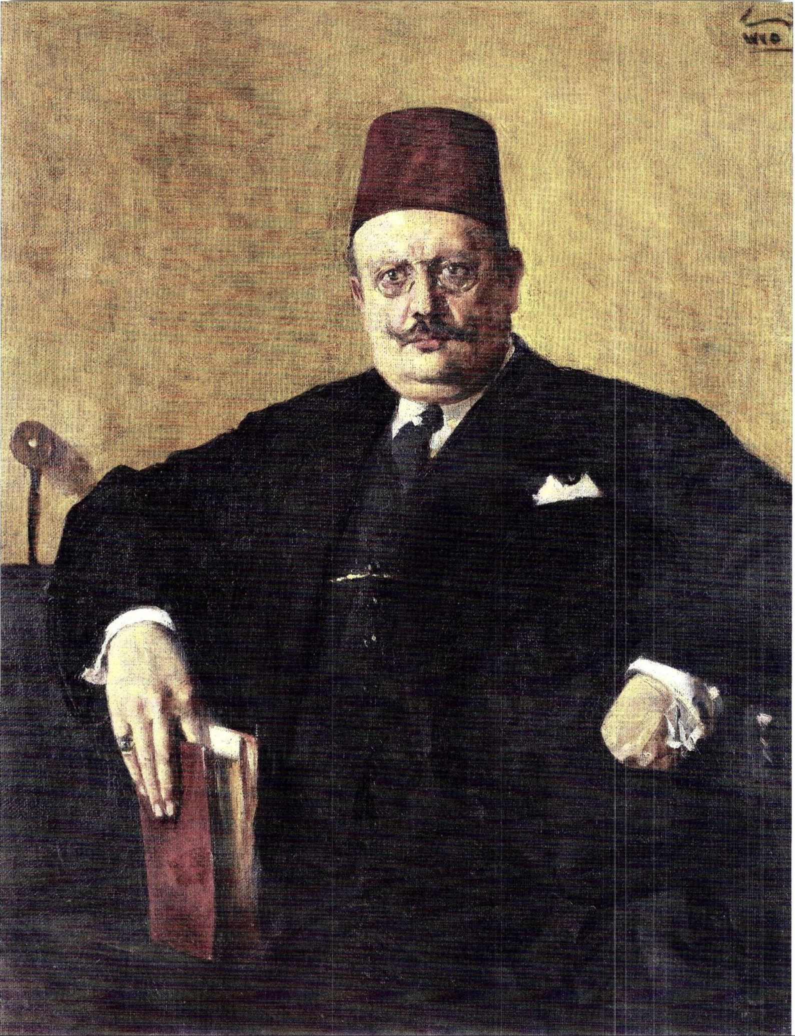
LEFT THE PERSIAN AMBASSADOR, MUHSIN KHAN MO'IN AL-MOLK, AS 'APOTHEOSIS', 1885

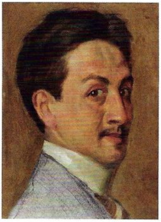
OPPOSITE İZZET FUAD BEY (LATER PASHA), 1885. İZZET FUAD APPEARS THREE TIMES IN THE ALBUM. HE WAS THE GRANDSON OF THE FAMOUS TANZİMAT STATESMAN FUAD PASHA, WHO HAD BEEN THE BENEFACTOR OF YUSUF'S FATHER, NASRÎ FRANKO, WHEN HE WAS IN THE IMPERIAL SERVICE

☐ *'Yusuf Franko's Characters: An Ottoman Bureaucrat's Caricatures' is at ANAMED (Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations), Merkez Han, İstiklal Cad 181, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, Jan 26 – June 1; +90 212 393 6000, anamed.ku.edu.tr*

☐ *The book of the exhibition, 'Youssouf Bey: The Charged Portraits of Fin-de-Siècle Pera from the Ömer M Koç Collection', ed. Bahattin Öztuncay (Vehbi Koç Vakfı, TL600), is available from cornucopia.net*


1892





THE ARTIST WHO LIT UP THE DARKNESS

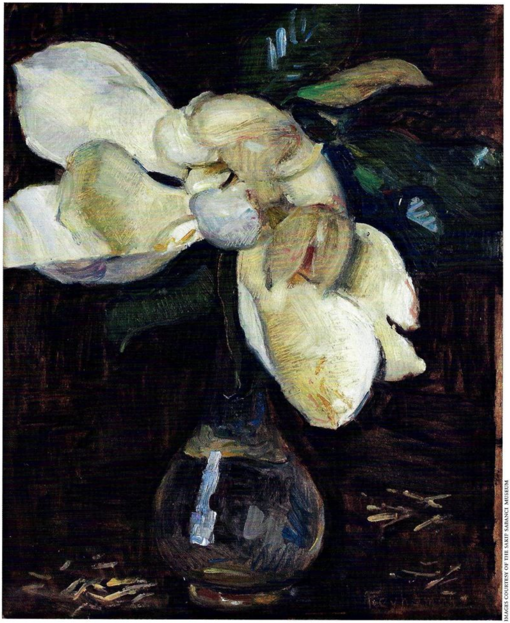
FORCED TO LEAVE PARIS IN THE BLEAK DAYS OF WAR, FEYHAMAN DURAN, TURKEY'S FIRST RECOGNISED PORTRAITIST, CHOSE TO EMPHASISE BEAUTY AND LIGHT. THE SAKIP SABANCI MUSEUM PAYS TRIBUTE WITH A GLOWING RETROSPECTIVE

The Sakıp Sabancı Museum excels at international blockbuster shows – Picasso, Monet, the Dutch Golden Age. When it turns its attention to Turkey's own artists, it also does so to brilliant effect. Ten years ago it celebrated the life and times of the pioneering Abidin Dino (1913–93), bringing into focus the literary and political angst of mid-century Istanbul. Now it is the turn of Feyhaman Duran (1886–1970), part of the 1914 Generation, whose careers, in the afterglow of Impressionism, spanned the end of the Ottoman era and the dawn of the Republic. With the outbreak of war, they were suddenly enemy aliens in their beloved bohemian Paris.

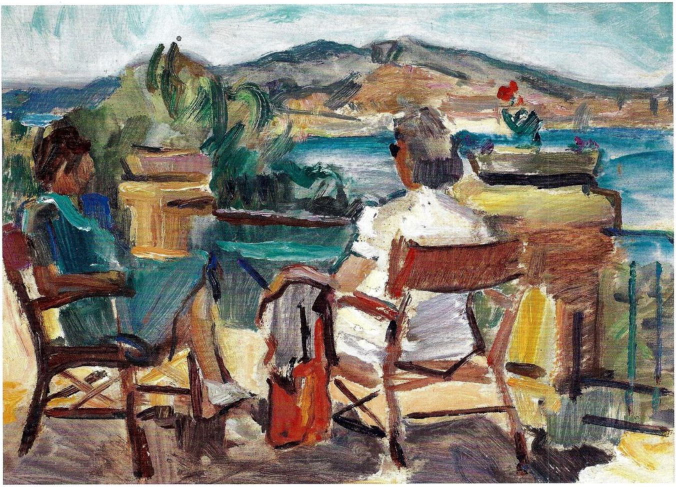
The Ottoman capital they returned to was in deepening despair, flooded with refugees from the Balkans and the Caucasus. Young men in their thousands were marching off to war, never to return – the colours of Beşiktaş football club are still dominated by black in their memory. But Feyhaman Duran, orphaned at an early age, chose instead to dwell on the joys of life. "It is difficult to see beauty," he wrote later, "but those who can are blessed."

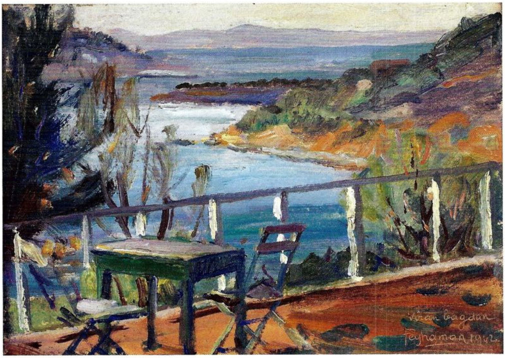
Feyhaman Duran: Between Two Worlds is full of luminous landscapes, still lifes and nudes, but it was his portraits that first earned him recognition. The likeness of the lawyer Celâleddin Arif Bey (left) predates his time

LEFT CELÂLEDDİN ARİF BEY, 1907
TOP SELF-PORTRAIT IN PARIS, C1911
RIGHT STILL LIFE WITH MAGNOLIAS



IMAGES COURTESY OF THE SAKIP SABANCI MUSEUM





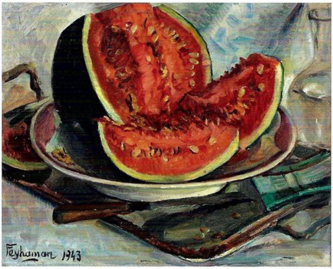
IMAGES COURTESY OF THE SAKIP SABANCI MUSEUM

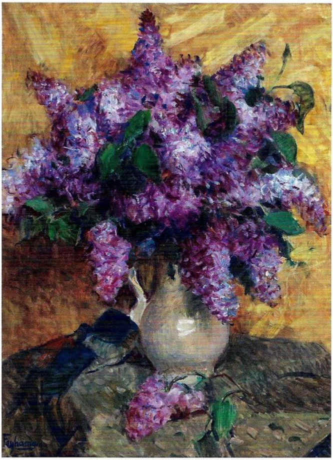
Above and right The Princes Islands, 1940s. The café (right) is on Büyükada. Feyhaman loved to paint 'en plein air'

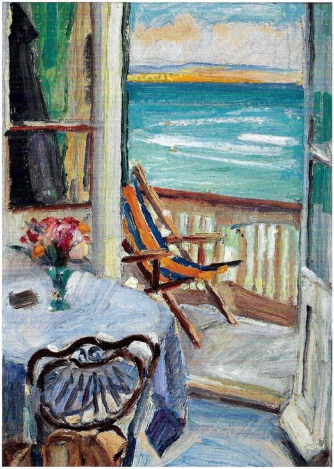
in Paris. Painting the daughters of the Egyptian prince Abbas Halim Pasha paid for his passage to France in 1911.

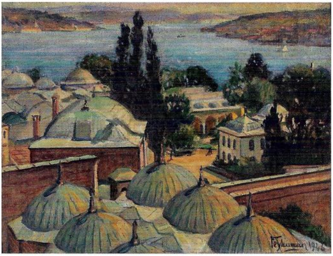
After his return to Istanbul, Feyhaman became an inspired teacher. He married one of his students, Güzin, granddaughter of a noted calligrapher, moving into her tiny wooden house in the Old City. By some miracle, the house survives, as does the Art Deco studio in the garden that they both used for 40 years.

This house, every corner of which speaks of their life together (see Cornucopia 42), is now closed for restoration, and the museum has borrowed 450 of the Durans' personal artefacts to recreate two of the rooms and their studio for this ambitious exhibition.









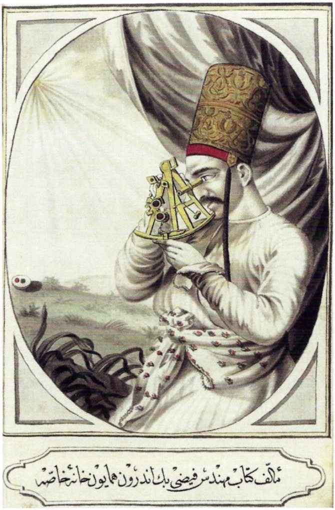
Top row Radiant still lifes: 'Watermelon' and 'Lilacs', 1940s
Above A view of the Bosphorus over the domes of the Topkapi
Left Feyhaman favourites: an interior, a balcony, the sea. The Princes Islands off Istanbul became the 1914 Generation's Côte d'Azur

☐ *'Feyhaman Duran: Between Two Worlds' is at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Emirgan, Istanbul, Jan 12 – July 30; sakipsabancimuzesi.org*

☐ *For the Durans' house, see Maureen Freely and Fritz von der Schulenburg in* Cornucopia No 42 *(cornucopia.net)*

AN EXACT SCIENCE

◁ ▽ Feyzi Efendi (left), an engineer and mathematician educated at the Topkapı Palace school, shows how to use a sextant in his 1805 book *Muhadarat-i Feyzi* (*Feyzi's Lore*). Sextants were developed in the 1730s. Spindler & Hoyer made the one below in Göttingen in 1934. Both items were in the exhibition *Pursuing Knowledge: Scientific Instruments, Manuscripts and Prints from Istanbul University Collections*, which celebrated the Ottoman cross-fertilisation of Eastern and Western science, cleverly juxtaposing instruments, archive pictures and manuscripts. The show, at the Museum for Turkish Bath Culture, has closed, but catalogues, by the curator Feza Günergun, are still available from bilimtarihibolumu@gmail.com


مؤلف كتاب مهندس فيضى بك اندرون همايون خانهٔ خاصه

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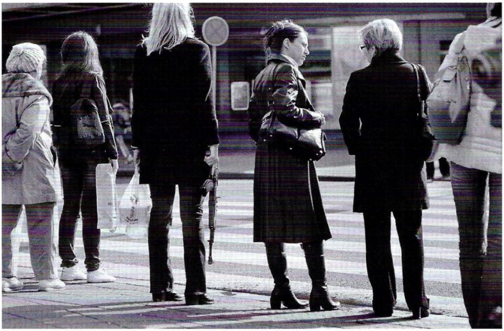
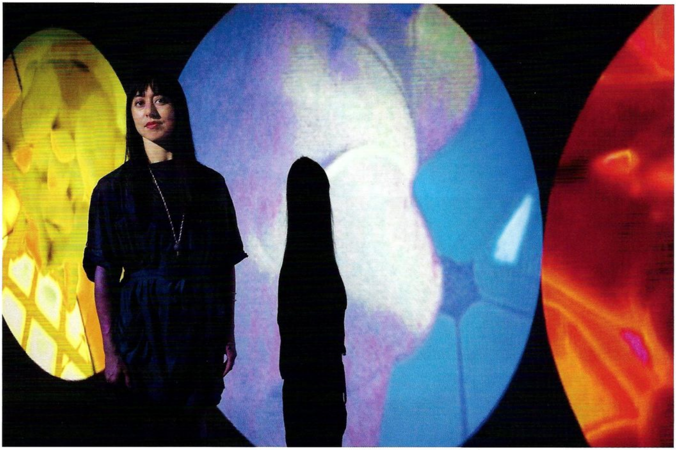


SRDAN VELJOVIC

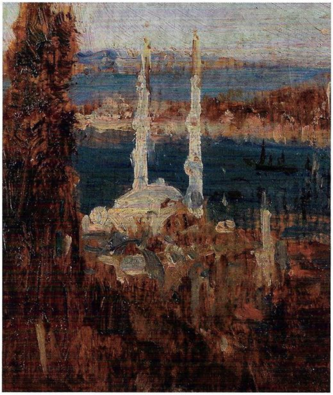
CHILLING ART

The latest Pera Museum exhibitions come like Turkish coffee, sweet (Félix Ziem, opposite), medium-sweet (*Istanbul Dogs*, at the museum's Istanbul Research Institute, overleaf) and distinctly sugarless (contemporary art from the Balkans, left).

◁ *Cold Front from the Balkans* (until May 7) includes this unnerving 2009 photograph taken at a Belgrade bus stop. The image of a blonde with a shopping bag in one hand and a Kalashnikov in the other is from a series by Milica Tomic 'dedicated to the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative – Belgrade'



MONICA FRITZ



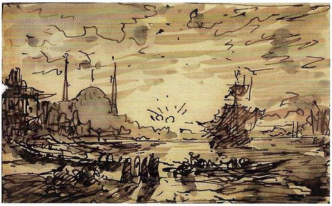
ZIEM MUSEUM, MARTIGUES

CITY LIGHT

◁ ▽ *Félix Ziem: Wanderer on the Sea of Light* (Pera Museum, until Jan 29) celebrates views of Istanbul and Venice by the Provençal pre-Impressionist. One of the few artists to see his work enter the Louvre in his lifetime, Ziem (1821–1911) had great success with his romantic landscapes (and often lurid sunsets). The evocative 'A Mosque', 1860 (left) and 'Bosphorus Sunset', 1880s (below) are from Martigues' Ziem Museum

DATA EVERLASTING

△ New York artist Katherine Behar (part Chinese, with a grandfather from Ankara) tackled big questions in *Data's Entry*, her recent installation show at the Pera Museum. Here she stands in front of 'Primaries' – videos that trap embryonic bodies in a machine world where data evolves even when organic life dies. The show is over but the catalogue will continue to intrigue (available from cornucopia.net)



ZIEM MUSEUM, MARTIGUES

HARBOUR MASTERS

▽ ▷ Istanbul Modern's new show *Liman / Harbor* takes the museum, which occupies an old dry-cargo warehouse, back to its maritime roots. Atmospheric environments – ships' cabins, decks, the seaside, the open sea – have been recreated to show sea-related works by artists of the past 150 years. A timeline lists turning points in the history of Istanbul's harbours, from the time of Theodosius to the present.

The striking photograph 'Artificial Blast' (below) by Arslan Sükan, 2009, recalls the huge explosion of the *Independenta* in the port of Istanbul in 1979. All Sükan's work excludes people. By contrast, 'Fishing Village' (Balıkcı Köyü), right, a 1984 canvas by the Aegean painter Nedim Günsur, who trained in Paris, is a delightful naive beach scene teeming with life and people. Fishermen hang out their nets, fish dry on racks, a mother holds her toddler's hand. *Jan 28 – June 4, istanbulmodern.org*

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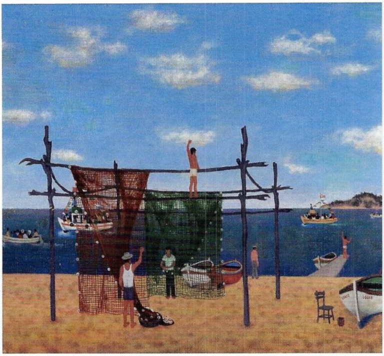
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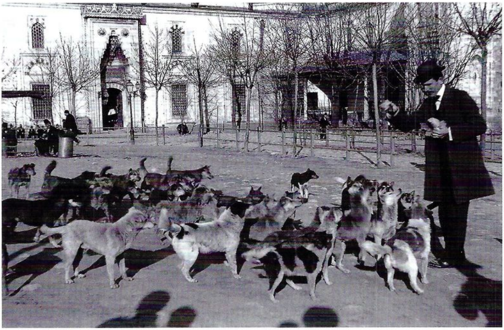
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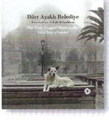
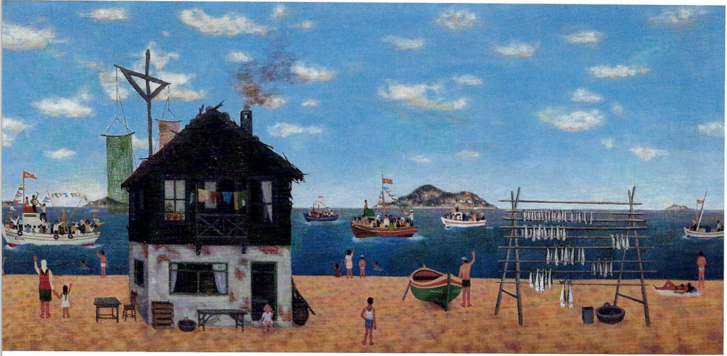
Street dogs have for centuries been part of the fabric of Istanbul. Every corner worth its salt is graced by a noble hound, paws folded. There were more dogs to be seen than fezzes, complained Alka Nestoroff, a Bulgarian diplomat's wife, in 1908. Then as now, these self-appointed security guards and refuse collectors were beloved of and fed by their two-legged neighbours.

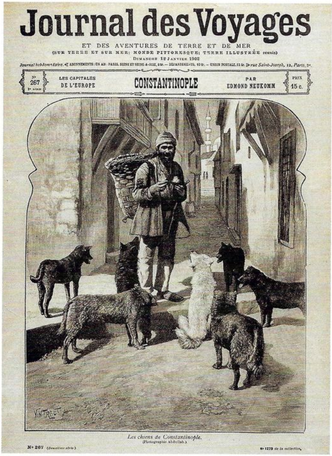
The abiding affection of Istanbullus for vagrant mutts is the subject of *The Four-Legged Municipality: Street Dogs of Istanbul* (Istanbul Research Institute, Tepebaşı, until March 11). This is primarily a photographic exhibition, tapping into the institute's vast collection of historic images, often affording a lovely excuse to air unfamiliar views of familiar sites. But it is harrowing as well as heart-warming.

Not all visitors shared Alka Nestoroff's disdain. In 1590, the mayor of Danzig painted 'a benevolent Turk' feeding both cats and dogs. In 1902, Constantinople's dogs graced the cover of the *Journal des Voyages*. But to many uncomprehending European eyes they were part of the backwardness and squalor of the Ottoman capital, with the Pasteur Institute urging that they be rounded up and slaughtered for their skin and bones. Western pressure won the day: in the summer of 1910, they were shipped out in their tens of thousands to a deserted island in the Sea of Marmara, where starving dog would literally eat dog.

Today's dogs are better managed, chipped and neutered, though a low-level war continues to be waged between dog-loving residents and zealous officials. The outraged populace never forgave the Ottoman administration for the purge. Some would say the empire went to the dogs as a result, and the fez, of course, went the same way.







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Les chiens de Constantinople.
(Photographie Abdullah.)

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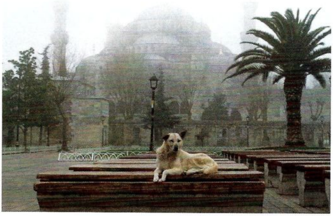

SINAN CANSEL

PIERRE DE GIGORD COLLECTION

ABOVE TIME FOR REPOSE IN FRONT OF THE BLUE MOSQUE: A PHOTOGRAPH BY SINAN CANSEL ENTITLED 'ANGELUS NOVUS', SULTANAHMET, 2016
OPPOSITE A GENTLEMAN IN STAMBOULINE FROCK COAT FEEDS THE DOGS IN SULTANAHMET
CENTRE A COVER OF THE PARIS WEEKLY 'JOURNAL DES VOYAGES', 1902, PART OF ITS SERIES ON THE CAPITALS OF EUROPE. THIS ENGRAVING OF 'THE DOGS OF CONSTANTINOPLE' WAS BASED ON A PHOTOGRAPH BY THE ISTANBUL STUDIO OF ABDULLAH FRÈRES
LEFT A SHAGGY-WINTER-COATED ANCIENT RESIDENT

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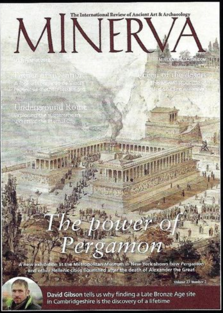
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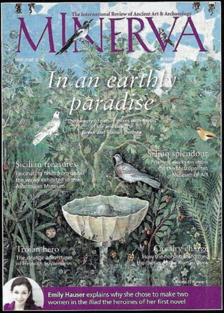
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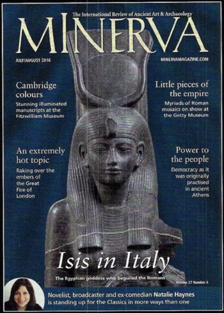
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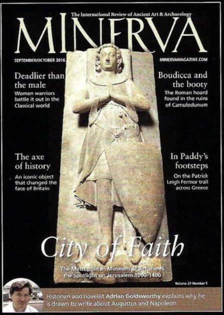
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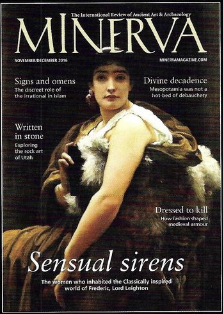
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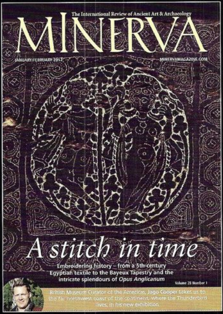
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Private view

ANDREW FINKEL WONDERS HOW LONG TURKEY WILL TAKE TO HEAL ITS SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS AFTER JULY'S ABORTIVE COUP, BEMOANS THE FATE OF THE FERİKÖY GRAVEYARD, AND TREATS HIMSELF TO A TRIP TO CAPPADOCIA FOR THE OTHERWORLDLY CAPPADOX FESTIVAL

Recovery position

I was not born on the 4th of July, or the hour of Indian independence, or even the 29th of October, when Turkey celebrates the founding of its own Republic. Yet this last date did mark a birth of sorts, or rather my reincarnation into a world of shadows. When I try to recall the Istanbul of the 1960s, a clear spring day comes into mind. I see green hills above the sea-blue of the Bosphorus, tinged with the purple-pink blush of Judas-tree blossom. I remember no colour at all in the Istanbul to which I returned after a long absence – by chance, on Independence Day 1980. It is night and the street lights are so dim it is a wonder anyone bothers to turn them on.

The Republic was not in great shape. Neighbourhood gun battles between left and right spilled over into the universities – earning one particularly wide corridor of Istanbul Technical University the nickname "Bonanza", after the popular TV western. There were shortages of commodities as basic as cooking oil. Turkish coffee was an import the country could no longer afford. One newspaper even had its own logo to use beside the headline of the latest outrage – the word ANARCHY in stencilled letters across a red inkblot symbolising a splodge of spilled blood. The political rancour was such that parliament failed month after month to agree on whom to elect for the largely symbolic role of president.

It was touch and go whether the military would seize power, as they had on two previous occasions. Summer came and went, and the *New York Times* correspondent, on *coup d'état* watch, decided to postpone her holiday no longer. On September 12 *The Guardian* assured its readers the generals would stay in their barracks. This, of course, turned out to be the day of the coup.

We knew then that this would be a trauma from which it would take Turkey time to recover. What we didn't realise was how deep and long-lasting that trauma would be. In the intervening years the country faltered between dependence on an authoritarian state and trust in the instincts of its own people. Turkey entered the global economy, experienced the economic crises of 2001–02 and the collapse of an entire post-war patronage network, and then sat down to negotiate entry into the European Union. Its fortunes became interwoven with events in Brussels, New York, even the Far East – let alone the new outlying neighbourhoods of Istanbul. The idea that you could ever again plonk a tank in front of the television station and seize power became increasingly absurd.

And yet on July 15, 2016, someone tried exactly that. The coup attempt collapsed hours after it started, but not before 240 people had died. This time the government rode a wave of popular sentiment to increase its power. It has become much stronger, even if the country over which it reigns has been weakened. We are beginning to realise that even a failed, foolish coup is a form of trauma. What we still don't know is how deep it is, or how long it will take to recover.

Beyond the graveyard

We have the dead to thank for the fact that not every green space in Istanbul is covered in concrete. In Feriköy, a stone's throw from a crowded business district, the Protestant cemetery still retains the feel of how the land would have looked before the city came along. The Catholic cemetery, over the road, is large and formal, the graves in serried ranks alongside patriotic monuments to the French and Italian dead of the First World War. By contrast, the Protestants are buried higgledy-piggledy, altogether more relaxed.

No doubt some developer would happily see the sites developed, and (explains the historian Brian Johnson) this has happened once before. In the mid-19th century the European dead were made to vacate the old "Frankish Cemetery" that stood in the way of an expanding city. That graveyard, ironically enough, now corresponds to Gezi Park – a site famous for the 2013 protests to keep the public garden intact. The stone lids once covering the graves there were moved to Feriköy. In the Catholic graveyard they were used to construct a tall mausoleum, but in the Protestant one they are simply leaning against the perimeter wall. The unique inscriptions and carved imagery are eroding. The graves of the first English merchants are crumbling into dust. So, too, is that of the 17th-century Dutch ambassador Levinius Warner (1619–65), whose collection of manuscripts is now the backbone of the Leiden University Middle Eastern collection.

The graveyard is managed by a consortium of Germany, the UK, the USA, Holland, Sweden, Hungary and Switzerland. Surely so many wise heads can be put together to save these historical records.

Strangely wonderful

The day I finally sit down to compile a list of my favourite weird and wonderful experiences, watching the Sun Ra Arkestra perform *Space Is the Place* under a full moon at last May's Cappadox Festival will warrant more than an honorary mention.

Of course, a trip to the upside-down landscape of Cappadocia might in itself figure on that list. Here, tall buildings reach not for the sky but towards the centre of the earth, in the form of monastic complexes and labyrinthine underground cities. Gashes in the earth reveal rippling cliff edges and bulbous outcrops of volcanic tufa. It is a geology that teems with emotion. It's not surprising that Cappadocia once inspired early Christian ecstatics in search of the ethereal, or that it now plays home for a few days every year to Turkish counterculture. Cappadox enthusiasts grab their yoga mats and head off for a festival of art, gastronomy, a bit of New Age self-help, lots of music and a dose of community politics.

Even a hard-boiled case like myself got out of bed for a dawn performance by the techno Sufi ney player Mercan Dede, and walked by flashlight after dusk to hear the classical harpist Şirin Pancaroğlu jam with post-rock cellist Rebecca Foon. The festival is the work of Pozitif, run by Ahmet Uluğ and Cem Yegül, and is in part a tribute to the memory of Ahmet's brother Mehmet, whose dream it had been. Although Pozitif has promoted concerts by U2 and Patti Smith, they reserve a soft spot for the Sun Ra Arkestra, one of the first names they brought to Turkey.

Sun Ra was what Bertie Wooster would have called "a strange cove". Back in the 1950s he managed to combine musical styles and a personal myth of mind-merging with creatures from Saturn into an early expression of black liberation. He refused the US military draft some 25 years before Muhammad Ali did the same. The band that still bears his name, draped in spangled lurex, honked and hooted its fusion of funk and Dixieland. The weird precipices of Cappadocia undulated in sympathy. Even better than thinking they had died and gone to heaven, the Arkestra must have felt they had been abducted by aliens. ◆

Andrew Finkel is a founder of the P24 platform for independent journalism, and the author of 'Turkey: What Everyone Needs to Know' (OUP, £10.95); afinkel@superonline.com

Written out of history

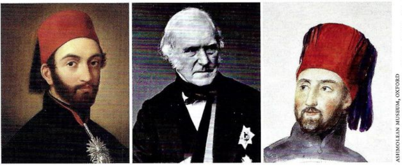
Plucked from obscurity to become minister of war seven times, Hasan Riza Pasha is ignored by British and Turkish historians alike. Yet he deserves credit for his role in crucial reforms that prevented the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. David Barchard on a forgotten force behind the throne

Imagine yourself in the throne room of the harem at Topkapı Palace in August 1839. It was an occasion "without exaggeration as magnificent as the *Arabian Nights*", recorded two Western visitors, the wives of French officials at the Ottoman mint who had been lucky enough to get an invitation.

"The walls were hung with rich brocades, and the floor covered with the richest cashmeres. The young Sultan reposed in a superb chair, embroidered with pearls, rubies, and emeralds… a thousand then prostrated themselves before the Sultan and kissed his feet, whilst beautiful young Circassians also showered handfuls of sequins amongst them until the whole apartment was ankle deep with them…"

This was one of the earliest ceremonies at the court of Abdülmecid I, just 16 years old and Sultan for under two months. Outwardly it was a display of Ottoman imperial magnificence worthy of an empire at its zenith. The political and military reality was very different.

ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION



ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION

ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Top Hasan Riza Pasha (1809–77), Ottoman minister and reformer, in old age
Above, from left Sultan Abdülmecid – Riza protected him from his father; Riza's nemesis, the powerful British ambassador Stratford Canning; and his rival-turned-ally, the grand vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha

Turkey's situation has seldom been bleaker than it was in those first few months after the death of Mahmud II. A desperate colossus, Mahmud had ruled for 31 years, weathering a series of military defeats while trying to re-equip the Empire for survival. But, just two days before his death, his new Ottoman Army, the product of more than a decade of Westernising military reforms, had been utterly destroyed in four hours of battle at Nizip, in southeastern Turkey, by the invading forces of the ruler of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha. Mahmud died without hearing the news.

The most powerful person in the court was now the 32-year-old Bezmiâlem, the Valide Sultan, widow of Mahmud II and mother of Abdülmecid. As a woman, she had no public personality in Ottoman life, but it seems to have been her advice that chiefly guided her son's decisions until her death 14 years later, as contenders, Turkish and foreign, battled for his attention.

Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, a 70-year-old military veteran on sea and land, was immediately made grand vizier. He was essentially only a figurehead. Lower down the cabinet, incessant political battles crucial to the Empire's future and the survival of the country would be fought out over the following two decades.

Hüsrev's appointment had one immediately disastrous effect. Ahmed Fevzi Pasha, the *kapudan pasha* or grand admiral, panicked, as the two pashas were old enemies. The admiral fled from the Aegean to Egypt, taking the entire Ottoman navy with him and leaving Istanbul defenceless.

"The Empire can do nothing of itself; its army scarcely consists of 10,000 or 12,000 men… barely sufficient to man the forts. The navy, on the other hand is completely at an end since the defection of the Capitan Pasha. There are now in the Bosphorus only a few frigates… but not a single ship of the line…. This immense Eastern empire is falling into ruins," *The Times* wrote.

The Ottomans did not need to be told this. In the 1830s they had watched, powerless, as France conquered and absorbed Algeria, an outlying Ottoman fiefdom. The Empire itself faced two mortal threats nearer at hand, one from Russia and the other from Mehmed Ali's Egypt. The Sultan had been obliged to call the Russians troops onto the Bosphorus to keep the troops of Mehmed Ali from taking Istanbul. Now, with the Russian threat rising, the Ottomans had to look to either the British or the French for naval protection against the Egyptians and Russians.

For an Islamic world empire, whose head bore the title of caliph, appealing to the West was invidious. Ottoman society, including the court, was fiercely divided about how to act. Some (notably the clergy) wanted no compromise over Islamic tradition and hated the fact that Mahmud II had banned traditional Oriental costume and spoken of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims.

When Abdülmecid was invested with the Sword of Osman at Eyüp in August 1839, his first public appearance, the young Sultan had to make a choice between the old and new styles. He chose to follow his father.

He appeared "dressed in the new [Western] costume introduced by his father, and… all the efforts of the Sheik Islam and of the Ulemas to induce him to adopt the turban and the old Turkish dress having failed", London's *Morning Chronicle* writes. It was a signal that Turkey had embarked on a new road and there was to be "no re-establishment of the old usages". (The old usages persisted for the clergy, however, who did not adapt their clothing. A few years later, they were still strikingly visible.)

Almost exactly three months later, on November 3, 1839, Turkey's first period of Westernisation, known today as the

Tanzimat – ie, reorganisation, or perhaps *perestroika* – began with a ceremony in Gülhane Park below the Topkapı during which the grandiosely named Rescript of the Rose Chamber was read out, a blueprint for legal and constitutional reform along Western lines. The Tanzimat was both an attempt to strengthen the Empire's institutions and a call for British naval assistance against Russia and Egypt. The following year, Britain (which had signed a lucrative commercial treaty with the Ottomans in 1838) obliged by sending the Royal Navy to break the power of Mehmed Ali in the Mediterranean and Syria.

The Tanzimat document claimed to be restoring Islamic values, but most Ottoman conservatives saw its Westernising legal changes as a clear step away from their religion. The document had been drafted by the leading Westerniser, Mustafa Reşid Pasha. He had initially begun doing so in London, working with Sir Stratford Canning, a former ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, at this time serving as an MP.

On the morning of the Tanzimat's proclamation, the document was read out by Reşid, now foreign minister, but it was handed to him by a man with a very different outlook, the marshal of the palace, Hasan Rıza Pasha, a 30-year-old Egyptian, who (like the vizier Hüsrev Pasha) had begun life as a slave. Exceptional good looks and keen intelligence had made him a favourite of Mahmud at an early age, after he was talent-spotted as a waiter in a coffee house. According to contemporary stories, he had been on such good terms with the old Sultan that he could intervene to protect the five-year-old Abdülmecid from a beating for disobedience by his father. That must have taken considerable self-assurance: Mahmud executed even his highest officials if they displeased him. And apparently it earned him the lifelong gratitude of the boy who became the next Sultan.

At the processions of Abdülmecid, Rıza stood out strikingly. "A young Turk of remarkable beauty, whose thick raven-black beard contrasted with the whiteness of his complexion, as did his whole appearance with that of the sickly [young] sovereign," is how one observer put it, adding that Rıza was believed to be the lover of the Valide Sultan. "He alone pulled the strings of Turkish politics."

Rıza was by temperament mainly a soldier, not a courtier. But after the death of Mahmud, backed by the young Sultan and his mother, he was in control of the court as its marshal or chamberlain. He was also deeply religious and allied himself with the clergy. It is in this capacity that he creeps into English narratives as the "bad guy" at the Sultan's court who headed the "reactionary" or clerical party and tried, initially successfully, to block Canning's access to the Sultan when, in January 1842, he returned to Istanbul as ambassador.

Canning's mission in Turkey was essentially an anti-Russian one. He and his political masters in London believed that if the Ottoman Empire could become a modern state, it would serve as a barrier to the expansion of Russia. His emotional loyalties, however, were with Christianity, and he arrived at a time when religious conservatives were in the ascendant in Ottoman politics. After 1840 Canning's Westernising protégé, Reşid, was out of the cabinet for six years and kept far away as ambassador to Paris.

Canning's goals were to oust Rıza from the court, win the heart of the young Sultan, then push for the administrative and legal reforms he thought essential for the survival of the Empire. These included introducing equality and freedom for non-Muslims. Because the Ottomans knew that the Empire was almost entirely dependent on Britain for its survival in the confrontation with Russia, he achieved the first two aims, though it took him some years.

"The downfall of Riza in August 1845 was largely Canning's work, but it took more than three years to make his influence tell against so formidable an adversary who had detected an opponent the moment he saw the ambassador," wrote Stanley Lane-Poole, Canning's biographer. In 1846 and again in 1848, Canning steered Reşid into office, and the Tanzimat reforms gathered pace.

"We must have Gavur [Infidel] Pasha to treat with the Gavurs," Hüsrev Pasha is said to have joked sourly. Reşid held office for over three years. During this time, Rıza quietly abandoned his opposition to Westernisation and he and Reşid Pasha eventually became more or less allies.

There was a downside for the Ottomans in Canning's success. In 1845, when Rıza was pushed out of office as a result of pressuring by the ambassador, he released details to the British press of his plans for restructuring the Turkish army. As published in *The Manchester Guardian* of February 1846, these suggest the mind of a highly professional soldier capable of doubling the size of the Ottoman army with a realistic scheme for conscription.

The Times was approving. "Riza Pasha increased its efficiency to a remarkable degree, not only by the conscription, by his regulations for drill, and by strengthening the corps, but by the establishment of military hospitals, and by his rigid attention to the improvement of the food, clothing, munition and arms of the troops."

It's hard to imagine British papers commenting on successful officials in Turkey in this way today. What had happened? The answer is partly that before the days of the telegraph, journalistic reporting was more like letter-writing. But there is another factor at work. By the late 1840s and 1850s, the emergency facing the Empire had cast an international spotlight on Ottoman politics, and some ministers in the Sultan's court spent time making sure that their particular point got through to the British public. This was a reflection of the high level of British influence in Turkey during the decade before the Crimean War.

Senior pashas and ministers had their French secretaries and it was doubtless they who talked to foreign journalists – who in some cases at this date would have been moonlighting diplomats. We even find pashas briefing against each other and leaking details of their clashes in the council to the Western media.

This may have influenced the public. Stratford Canning took no notice. His hostility, however, never abated and his perception of Rıza as a greedy and corrupt reactionary dominate both his diplomatic dispatches and his biography. Canning's narrative, because it is easily available, has had a dire effect on English-language accounts of the crucial years before the Crimean War, when Turkey established recognisable modern institutions. Canning knew virtually no Turkish and took no interest in the internal life of Turkey.

Sir Henry Layard, one of his deputies, echoes Canning's strictures, even though by the time Layard was writing, in the 1880s, Rıza had recently died, after a career spanning more than three decades in which he had been one of the most capable Ottoman generals, seven times *serasker*, or minister of war, and no enemy of modernity. He was known as "Cihan Seraskeri", or Serasker of the World. He ended up, in fact, as a member of the first Ottoman Assembly. Evidently the diplomatic knowledge on which accounts of Turkish history are often based was superficial and dominated by personal antagonisms.

During the Crimean War, when Rıza was one of the main Ottoman generals, still a striking figure with a picturesque black beard, we find him perhaps sardonically asking a visiting journalist about the health of the British ambassador and presenting his compliments. In the 1860s he was an ally and colleague of Fuad Pasha, the most energetic of the reformers. In the 1870s, up until his death, Rıza was still both a top military figure and a parliamentarian.

Today he has largely disappeared from Turkish history books, though public fountains in Serasker Caddesi in Kadiköy (near the site of his yalı) and Beşiktaş remain as memorials – and his descendants come together in a Facebook page. Canning's "reactionary" proved to be one of those who helped the precarious Empire of 1839 cohere into a strong modern state. ◆

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Carpet woven by the Esari-Beshir,
a Turkoman tribal group, c1880.
James Cohen Carpets

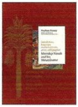
BOOKS

The exquisite record of a 16th-century military campaign; the historian who illuminated Byzantium; the young Englishman who carved up the Ottoman Empire; and John Freely and John Carswell, two insatiable adventurers

PAINTING THE MAP GREEN

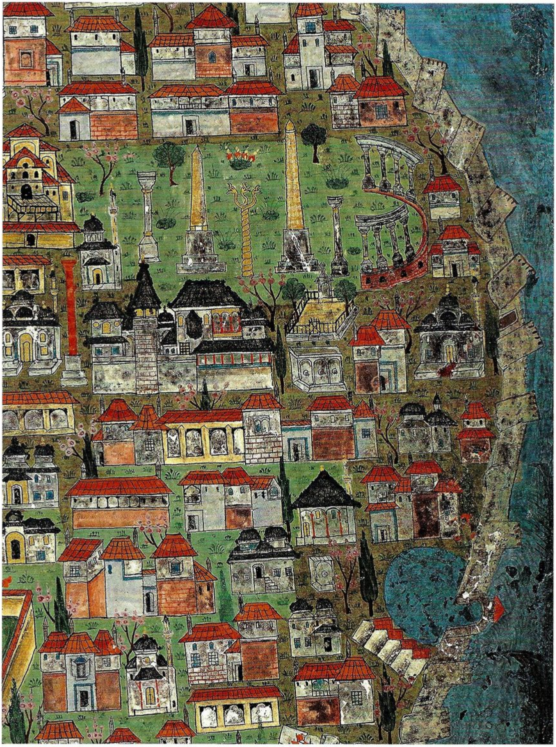
Tim Stanley

Matrakçi Nasuh and his Menâzilnâme
Nurhan Atasoy
Masa, Istanbul, 2 vols £230

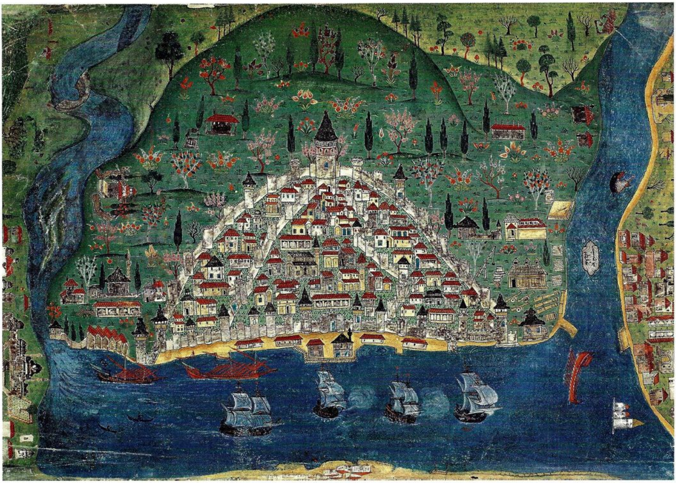


This new facsimile of an illustrated Ottoman manuscript gives us an extraordinary tour of a large slice of the Sultan's domains. Created at a time when the Ottoman Empire was growing exponentially in size and power, the original work is a monument to a great triumph. In 1534–35 Süleyman the Magnificent led a military campaign against the Safavid rulers of Iran and Iraq and conquered northern and central Iraq.

The manuscript reproduced in facsimile is the only copy of the work and is entirely by the hand



Right A detail from Matrakçi Nasuh's 'Book of Stages', in the library of Istanbul University. It follows Süleyman the Magnificent's army from Istanbul to the Arabian Desert and back in 1534–35. This view of Istanbul shows old Kadirga harbour (bottom right), and the Roman Hippodrome (top), with its obelisks and Serpent's Column, next to the black-roofed Ibrahim Pasha Palace



ABOVE THE GENOESE QUARTER OF GALATA, WITH THE GALATA TOWER AT THE TOP – ONE OF MATRAKÇI NASUH'S TWO VIEWS OF ISTANBUL. AT THE BOTTOM, GALLEONS AND IMPERIAL BARGES FILL THE GOLDEN HORN; WHERE THE INLET NARROWS ON THE LEFT IS THE HOLY SHRINE OF EYÜP. THE CANONS OF TOPHANE ON THE RIGHT POINT ACROSS THE BOSPHORUS TO ÜSKÜDAR

OPPOSITE OLD CITY LANDMARKS ARE LOVINGLY SHOWN, INCLUDING TOPKAPI PALACE WITH ITS MANY COURTYARDS, TOP LEFT. TO ITS RIGHT IS THE MASSIVE AYASOFYA. BENEATH THAT ARE THE LEAD DOMES OF THE BAZAAR AND THE WALLED OLD PALACE, HOME TO THE HAREMS OF EARLIER SULTANS. AT THE BOTTOM ARE THE TRIPLE LAND WALLS AND YEDİKULE, THE FORTRESS OF THE SEVEN TOWERS, USED TO INCARCERATE ERRANT ENVOYS AND STATESMEN

of its author, Matrakçı Nasuh, who died in 1564. This writer produced books on diverse subjects, and several of them are illustrated with topographical paintings which he seems to have executed himself.

In this case, he painted 107 views that show the route the Sultan followed during the campaign. These images complement the relatively simple exposition of the route in the text – a simplicity obscured by the courtly language employed. The book is something like a campaign diary, with a record of each stage of the journey. The editor, Professor Nurhan Atasoy, has therefore chosen to call the work the *Menâzilnâme* – the *Book of Stages*.

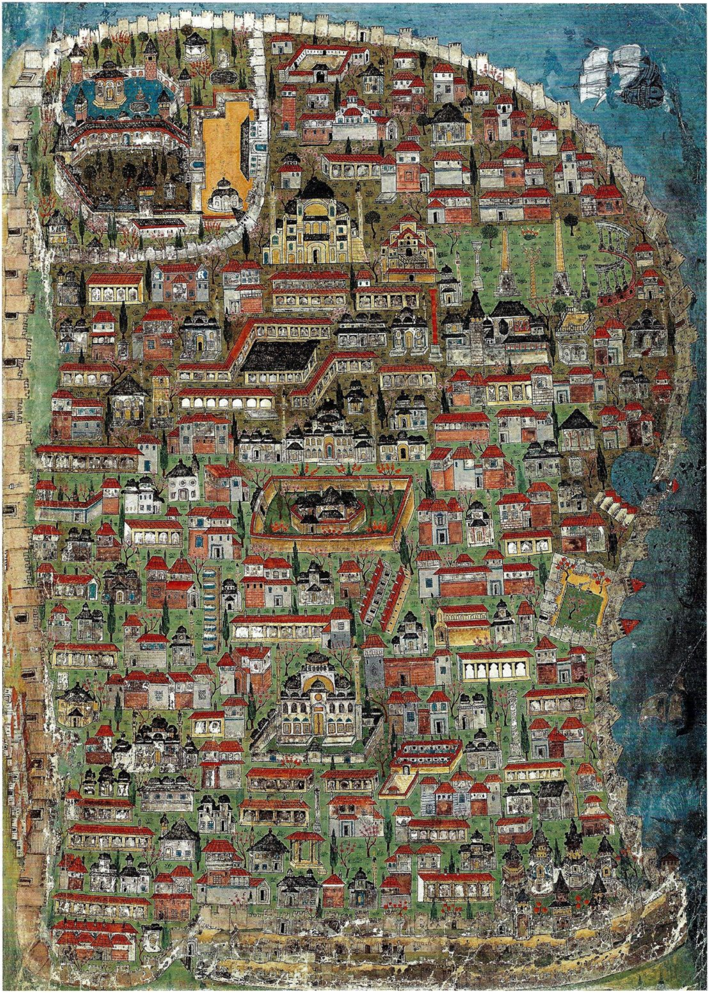
The Sultan set out from Istanbul in June 1534, crossing Anatolia and passing north of Lake Van to enter Iranian territory. The main Safavid army evacuated eastwards in the face of the Ottoman advance, leaving their forces in Iraq isolated. Having reached Hamadan via Tabriz, Süleyman turned westward across the Elburz Mountains and descended into Iraq, where Baghdad had been abandoned by its Safavid garrison.

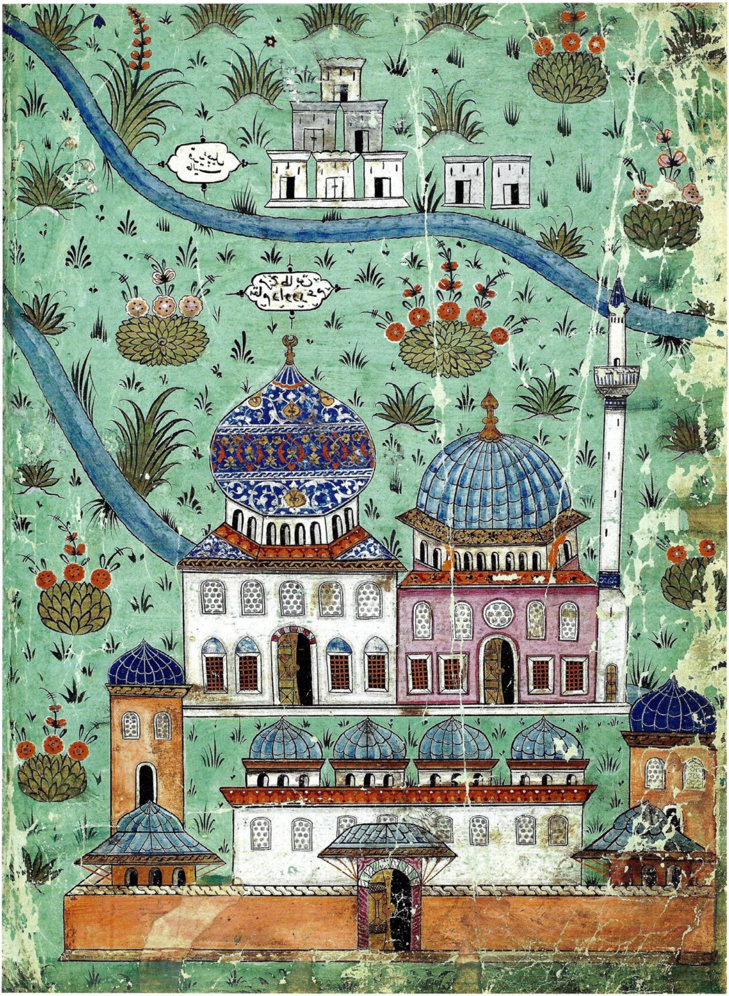
Having marched south as far as Najaf, where the great shrine of Ali ibn Abi Talib still stands, the Sultan turned back. After further operations in western Iran, he returned to Anatolia via Diyarbakır, Aleppo and Adana and reached Istanbul in December 1535.

This long and arduous journey is illustrated in a very consistent and individual fashion. The depictions of cities are clearly related to the bird's-eye views of cities produced in European contexts in the 15th century. This type of illustration had already been absorbed into the Ottoman tradition by the 1520s, when Piri Reis produced his famous *Book of Seamanship*, but in the *Book of Stages* Matrakçı Nasuh transformed it, creating something unmistakably Ottoman.

In his depictions of cities, Nasuh chose the main architectural features of each place and set them down on paper as isolated buildings, seen mostly from the front, flattened onto the page and arranged in horizontal registers. A few less-memorable buildings were placed around them to suggest an urban context, but the effect is tempered by the idealised springtime landscape in which these structures are set. An eye-catching use of colour and a sense of silence caused by the total absence of human or animal activity add to the mood of abstraction.

There is no horizon, and the landscapes are mostly solid





green, suggesting the grass that sprouts briefly in spring before rapidly turning brown in the summer heat. These endless lawns are set with a scattering of plants and trees, many in flower. The exceptions are the desert scenes, which are sand-coloured, but even here the palm trees are shown in flower, and in a strikingly accurate way.

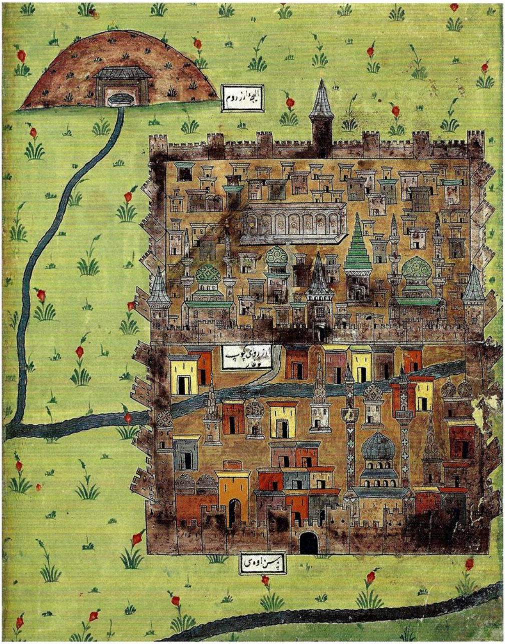
This charming element has a message. When Süleyman passed through these regions, he brought with him the "felicity" or happiness that was the assumed characteristic of Ottoman monarchs, filling the role that "majesty" played in Western Europe. The happiest time of the year is spring, and so Süleyman's presence caused a spring-like season to occur, at least in Nasuh's imagination.

On first examination, the paintings seem too awkward and lacking in polish to be considered masterpieces on an international level. They are, after all, the work of an amateur, assiduous and gifted as he may have been. Yet negative judgments soon seem irrelevant in the face of the amazing wealth of visual information that Nasuh provided, despite the constraints of his method.

There is nothing else like these topographical paintings, and we must be very grateful for the enormous effort their originator made. He had surely conceived the project in something like its final form before he left Istanbul, making notes and sketches very regularly for more than 18 months.

We must be grateful, too, to Nurhan Atasoy and the publishers for producing such an impressive reproduction of the manuscript. The transliterated text and the illustrations were published in full in 1976, but this new facsimile allows us to see the illustrations far more clearly and to assess the manuscript as a complete work of art. As Professor Atasoy writes, this will save the manuscript from further excessive handling.

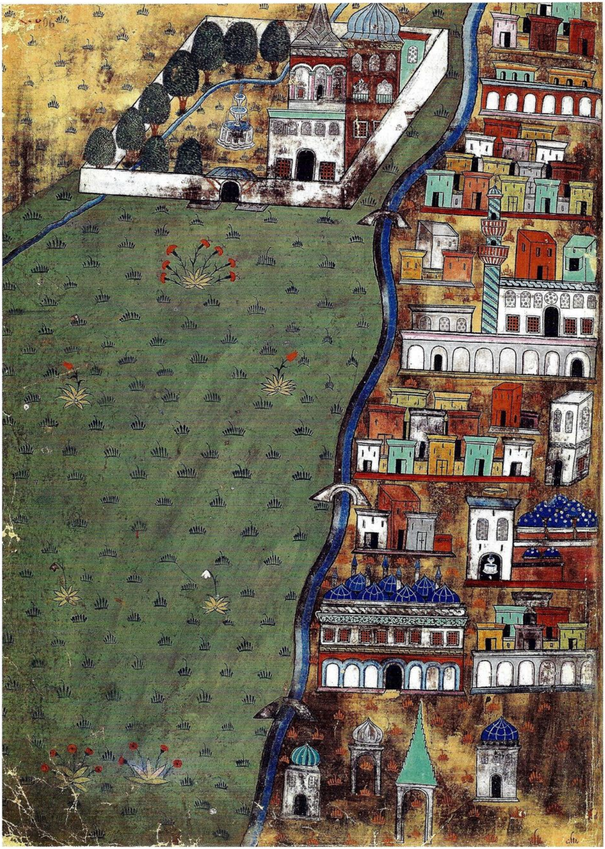
Tim Stanley is Senior Curator for the Middle Eastern Collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum; t.stanley@vam.ac.uk

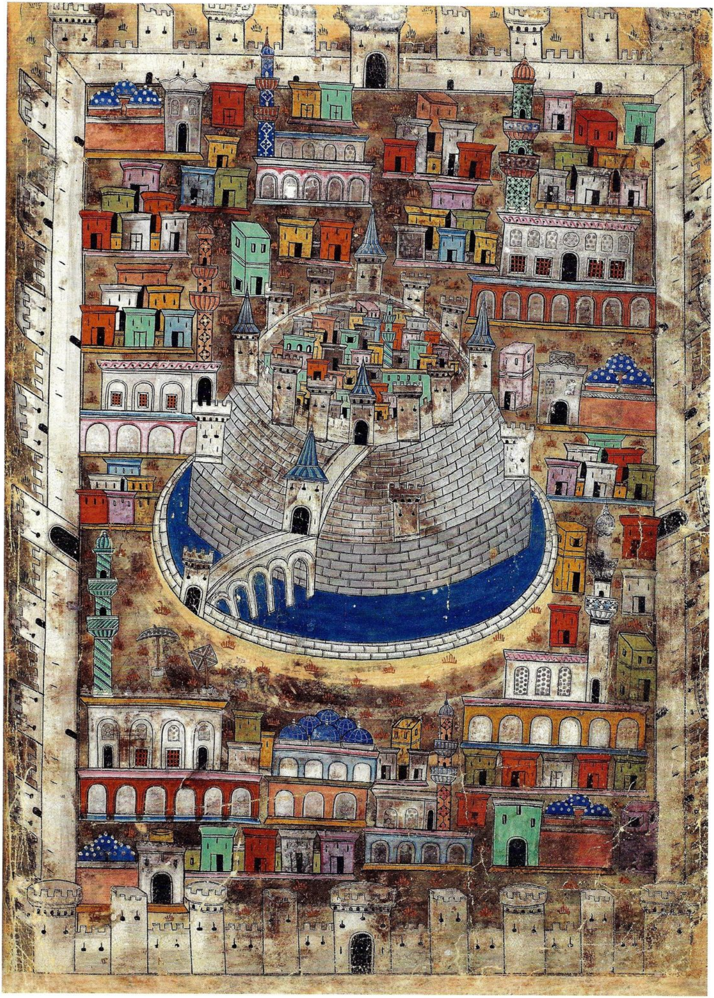


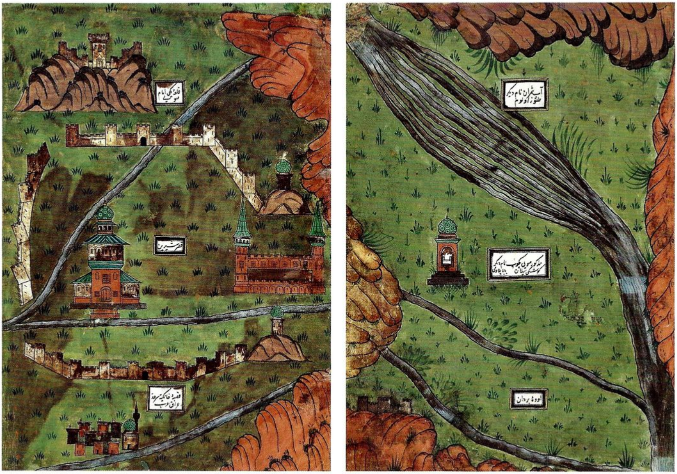
Above The Citadel of Erzurum, with its flat-roofed houses and fantastical domes that have a Central Asian air about them. A tomb tower ('kümbet') sports a green conical roof. Flowing from a distant hill is a healing hot spring

Opposite A day's journey north of Aleppo is the Merc-i Dabik, or Shrine of David, where Selim I had decisively defeated the Mamluks in 1516, a battle that changed world history

Overleaf Affluent Aleppo grew round its Mamluk citadel. The city abounds with Turkish baths, whose blue domes are pierced by elephant-eye lights, and a variety of elaborately decorated minarets

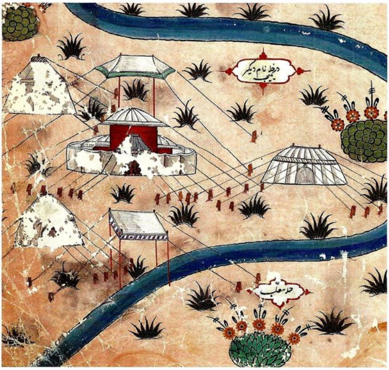


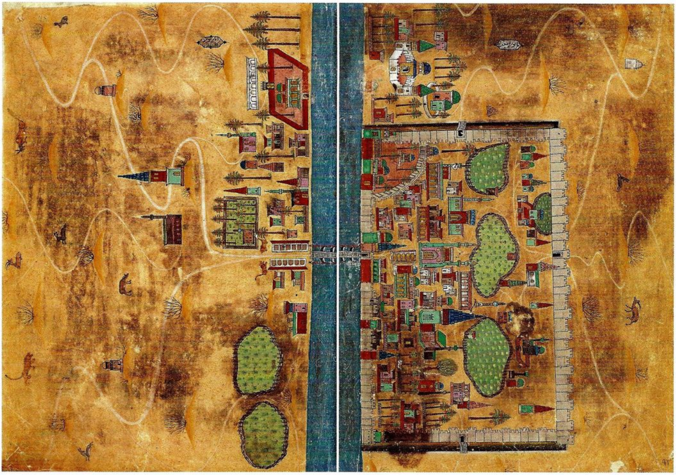


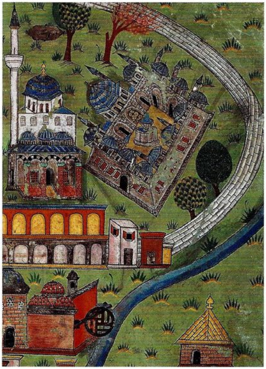


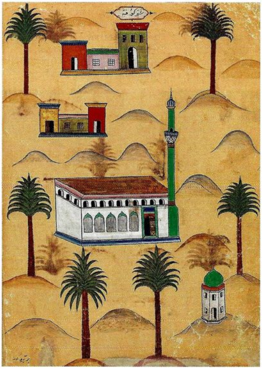
Above and above right The Imam Castle, north of Baghdad, and the nine branches of the Simran river known as the Nine Deaths
Right The Euphrates winds through a pink landscape past the staging posts of 'Dahle, also known as Yenİce' (top) and 'Hadd-i Sa'leb'. One of the tents stands inside a canvas enclosure

Opposite, top In Baghdad, newly captured by the Ottomans, a pontoon bridge spans the Tigris, with its swirling currents. The desert teems with wildlife, and well-watered gardens create splashes of green
Bottom left Lush Eskişehİr, last stop on the return to Istanbul, sports a dervish visitors' lodge with a fountain and many chimneys, and the waterwheel of a red-roofed hamam
Bottom right The desert city of Kufa, southernmost point of Süleyman's campaign. Sand dunes and date palms surround the fabled 7th-century mosque







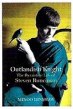


A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER

Jason Goodwin

Outlandish Knight The Byzantine Life of Steven Runciman

Minoo Dinshaw
Allen Lane, £30



There are times, reading this assured biography of Sir Steven Runciman, when one's attention swerves from the life and times of the great Byzantinist to focus on his biographer. Who is the young Proteus of research, balanced judgment and feline wit? Runciman was famously a stylist; so is Minoo Dinshaw. Historian, gossip and queer, Runciman was a mine of anecdote, much unprintable and often dealing with crowned heads (having encountered the *Almanach de Gotha* early in life, he never let it go). Dinshaw can certainly keep up, memorialising the relationship between Bloomsbury members as deftly as he analyses an academic manoeuvre or the thrust of a historical argument. But of him we are told nothing: only that he lives in London, and that this is his first book. His picture makes him look terribly young.

Runciman, who died in 2000 aged 97, remained at some level a boy himself, mischievous and as full of wheezes when he was helicoptered into Athos for a last hurrah as when he and a sister developed a complete religion, equipped with rites and the contents of a dressing-up box, in the gloomy family seat at Doxford before the First World War.

Steven's father was a retiring man, in a Liberal party that was, itself, slowly receding from political life. His indomitable mother had earned a first at Cambridge; together they became the first husband and wife to sit together in parliament. Before Eton, Steven owed his upbringing – and his French and Russian and first Greek – to nannies and a governess. Grandfather Runciman, who had made a shipping fortune, was a formidable old Victorian on whose steam yacht, *Sunbeam*, Steven reached Istanbul for the first time in 1926, catching, as he recognised, the very last rays of the Ottoman settlement. The family laughed behind their hands at old Walter, but they were a bit frightened of him, too, and his money – in a trust supervised by a solicitor called Humble – was known as Humble Pie.

Below Runciman's Byzantine Art class at Istanbul University, 1941. Wearing a white hat is his assistant Münire Çelebi, a sophisticated city cousin of the Egyptian Khedives

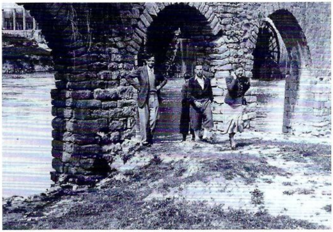
Runciman showed a precocious flair for languages – he was later to sit on the Purification of the Turkish Language Committee – and for dressing up. He grew five inches in his first half at Eton, befriended Eric Blair, Cyril Connolly and Dadie Rylands, and successfully practised voodoo on a bully. Cambridge brought Cecil Beaton, whose portrait of Runciman ("so huge and ugly and strong, with the most fruity voice") is on the cover of this book, and Bloomsbury-ite members of what Maurice Bowra would archly call "The Homintern". With a prize fellowship from Trinity he wrote his first book, a pioneering study of the Emperor Romanus Lecapenus. His brother married Rosamund Lehmann, a marriage he helped destroy, while he spent a summer with Edith Wharton.

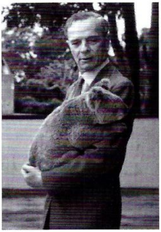
In an essay to mark his mentor's death, Anthony Bryer quoted the lines of a Persian distich, murmured by Mehmed the Conqueror as he surveyed the decayed city: "The spider weaves his web in the Palace of the Caesars..." Runciman was the spider; Dinshaw has brought us the whole fragile web, intact, lifted from a life that brackets the 20th century. From the glow of Edwardian Britain to the *bêtises* of communist Bulgaria, we see Runciman in warlord China, among the Bloomsbury set, teaching at Trinity, outmanaging the ambassador in Athens, living and lecturing in wartime Istanbul, and taking the Queen Mother out to lunch (four queens at the table). Independently wealthy, he was able to resist a career as tenured academic. Runciman's memoir was significantly entitled *A Traveller's Alphabet*, and in the course of a freewheeling life he became grand orator of the Orthodox Church, head of the British Council in Greece, a member of the order of the Whirling Dervishes, biographer of the White Rajahs of Sarawak, Greek Astrologer Royal and Laird of Eigg.

Clockwise from top left Steven's grandfather Walter, source of his 'material blessings', on board one of his yachts, 1920s; his parents, Walter and Hilda, the first married couple to sit in the Commons, in 1928; Steven in the middle of his siblings, in the early 1910s; in 1932, on the Hebridean Isle of Eigg, where he wrote his 'History of the Crusades'; Bakir Çelebi, head of the Mevlevi Whirling Dervishes, 1942; Steven in his house in Jerusalem, 1941, inspecting an icon; in his rooms at Trinity, decorated with its Napoleon III wallpaper, 1932; Collegers at Eton after bathing in the Thames, 1918

Runciman once called himself and Dadie Rylands "left-overs from more gracious days". He always did a neat line in faded glories and vanished pomp, his sympathies with echoes and survivals – not least the faint detectable ripples of the Other World to which he was rather grandly attuned: his tarot readings had an uncanny accuracy (and gave one woman the will to survive four years in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp). Orthodoxy entranced him, more perhaps than Hellenism or Byzantium, because "the Greek character", as he wrote in *The Great Church*, "has its

'ETONIAN SWIMMERS': ESTATE OF DENYS KING-FARLOW. ALL OTHER IMAGES: ESTATE OF SIR STEVEN RUNCIMAN





Top left The writer Freya Stark in 1947, when Runciman stayed with her in Asolo. 'My visit… was delicious,' he wrote to her. His biographer notes that she was one of the few friends he trusted in matters of prose style: 'He admired her compromise between plainness and porphyry… more than the excitable magniloquence of Patrick Leigh Fermor'

Top right At Caerlaverock, near Elshieshields, his home in Scotland, in the 1970s

Above left In Syria, 1938, with Count 'Stas' Ostrorog (centre), a Polish aristocrat, then the French Resident in Damascus. The Ostrorog Yali in Istanbul is one of the finest on the Bosphorus

Above right Newly knighted in 1959, Runciman enjoys a VIP tour of Sydney Zoo

ALL IMAGES: ESTATE OF SIR STEVEN RUNCIMAN

taste for the Mysteries". It could have been self-description. The Orthodox Church's "power of survival through worldly disasters lay largely in its acceptance of the transcendental mystery of the divine", he wrote; and one of his best-known books, *The Fall of Constantinople*, is written with dry-eyed unsentimentality. As Dinshaw observes, the city was doomed to fall, in 1453 or a generation later, and most of its work – the Paleologue's Hellenistic scholarship – was already done and exported convincingly to Western Europe. You may pity the plumage when the bird is actually dead. Runciman reserved his sorrow and anger for the events of 1204.

Runciman had first approached Byzantium through the mastery of Balkan and particularly Bulgarian sources. He was not the first to buck the prejudices of Western readers and scholars towards Byzantine history established since Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* – his mercurial rival Robert Byron was there before him – but Runciman's scholarship, persistence and readable style brought Byzantine history a sympathetic general audience.

His three-volume *History of the Crusades* ended with a ringing moral condemnation, regretting "so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding, the holy war itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost". Jan Morris surely meant Runciman when she memorialised the eminent Byzantinist who would visit Enrico Dandolo's resting place in Ayasofya only "to spit on his grave". Runciman damned the Venetian-led sack of Constantinople in 1204 in terms that, uttered after the Nuremberg trials, left no doubt in the public mind: "There was never a greater crime against humanity than the Fourth Crusade."

There was a theatrical quality to Runciman's performance as a historian. The theatricality belonged to him as a patrician and a tragedian, while it linked him to others working in the same liberal, humane style, including Hugh Trevor-Roper, who in 1956 complained that "our present Regius Professor would say that any historian who writes well must be a bad historian". (His target was VH Galbraith, author of *Introduction to the Use of Public Records*). Even now historians offering rival accounts must reckon with the sheer readability of Runciman's work.

No doubt some will relish Dinshaw's evidence that Runciman had few qualms about embellishing his personal history if it made a better story, so that his famous and pathetic account of playing a duet with the last Emperor of China was the purest moonshine; but even if the story was inaccurate it was acute, and revealed an understanding that the historian might well borrow from the novelist. Dinshaw puts it with characteristic dry wit: "For all the accusations of charlatanry Steven attracted throughout his career, he was actually as conscientious about his sources as about his cadences – though perhaps not more so."

Dinshaw himself writes with extraordinary poise and confidence. I had to reach for the dictionary more than once, and his judgments are both polished and reasonable. There will be many books about Byzantium, but never another biography of Runciman. What's more, in the course of 700 pages, I noticed not one misprint. We are dealing with a high order of intelligence combined, what is more rare, with powerful diligence. Bravo.

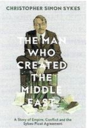
Jason Goodwin's latest book, 'Yashim Cooks Istanbul: Culinary Adventures in the Ottoman Kitchen' (Argonaut Books, £25), is available from cornucopia.net at £22.50

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF MAKING HISTORY

David Barchard

The Man Who Created the Middle East
A Story of Empire, Conflict and the Sykes-Picot Agreement

Christopher Simon Sykes
William Collins, £25


CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES
THE MAN WHO CREATED THE MIDDLE EAST
A Story of Empire, Conflict and the Sykes-Picot Agreement

People have been writing biographies and studies of Mark Sykes ever since his untimely death at the age of 39 from Spanish influenza during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. He was a prolific writer both as an author and later as a public servant, and also a talented amateur cartoonist, so there is plenty of material to draw upon.

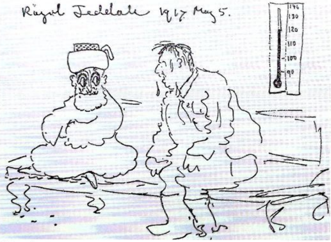
One of the delights of this book by his grandson is that almost every page has a sketch by Sykes himself. Originally they helped bridge the gap for a father-traveller and official who was usually away from home but wanted to share his life a little with his wife and children. Today they enable us to see things as he saw them and to share his amusement.

The collapse and partition of the Ottoman Empire was something the world had known was coming for almost a century. The first wave of partition in 1878 created a set of fully independent Balkan states which survive to this day. After 1918 the Islamic Middle East fared differently, with an imperialist carve-up of former Ottoman territories in the Middle East. Arab nationalist movements had to contend with the governments of France and Britain, who wanted an imperial presence in the Middle East – and also with Zionists hoping to create a Jewish homeland. Tsarist Russia, which would initially have been a major beneficiary, getting Istanbul and the Turkish heartlands, was plucked out of the equation by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

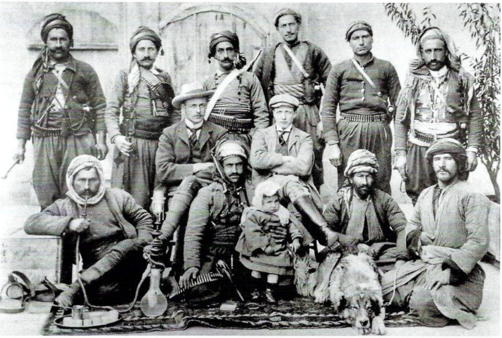
In 1915 Sykes joined a committee of British officials considering the future of their country's interests in the Ottoman Middle East after the war. Representing Lord Kitchener, the secretary of state for war, Sykes was the most junior appointee, only chosen because, writes his grandson, "he was one of the few people in the War Office who had any first-hand knowledge of the Ottoman Empire". He quickly became its driving force.

The British had to square both the Arab nationalists, who were military allies against the Ottoman Empire, and France, which had its eye on Syria and parts of southern Turkey. The Arabs were basically double-crossed. The interests of other nationalities, notably the Turks, were simply ignored. Later that year, Sykes began detailed negotiations about the borders of the post-war Middle East with François Georges-Picot, a French official who dreamed of creating a giant French colony in Syria, an Algeria of the Eastern Mediterranean. He did not get that, but he certainly extracted an unequal deal from Sykes. On May 19, 1916, three years to the day before Atatürk landed at Samsun to start Turkey's War of Independence, Britain and France confirmed the deal in a secret treaty which became public after the war.

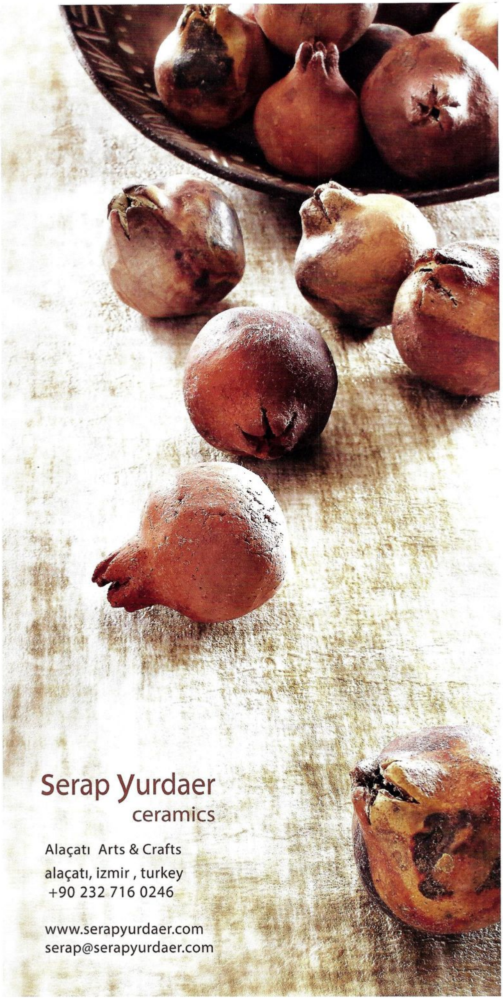
In its early years the deal looked outrageous to those who lost from it: Arab nationalists and Ottoman Turks. These days, anachronistically,



Mark Sykes portrays himself in full uniform and stifling 120°F heat, explaining his agreement with François Georges-Picot to Sharif Hussein, 'King of the Hejaz'



It took seven muleteers, a dragoman, a personal servant and Chello the dog to get Sykes (centre, left) across the Syrian Desert to Palmyra. He feared the site would soon be ruined by Cook's Tours, the colonnades 'strewn with beer bottles and orange peel' and 'the elderly virgins of England... hustled with aching backs and tired eyes... from Zenobia's bath to Zenobia's bed'



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denunciations of Sykes-Picot are usually coded declarations of support for the creation of a Kurdish state.

Before the war, Sykes had generally been pro-Turkish, the author of travel books that are often more sympathetic to the Ottoman Turks than to the Christian minorities, which in the post-Gladstonian first decade of the 20th century meant swimming against a largely Philhellene tide of prevailing opinion.

War, of course, changed everything, though I am not sure that Sykes, like his friend and fellow writer-cum-aristocrat-cum-politician Aubrey Herbert, would not have ended up vainly lobbying for the Turks in Parliament after the Greek invasion of Anatolia, had he lived long enough. A remark he made to Herbert about partitioning the Ottoman homelands, quoted by Sykes, sounds to me more like slightly cruel teasing between friends than serious discussion.

In some ways the most interesting parts of this book are not the technical, though not entirely academic, sections on the war and the treaties, but the biography of an absolutely extraordinary but very engaging man. Sykes's early years sound like episodes lifted from well-known novels, but with real life outdoing fiction. His father had been trapped into marriage like the character Johnny Eames in Trollope's *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, who barely escapes this fate. His mother then turned out to be a posher, more flamboyant version of the spendthrift, promiscuous Becky Sharp from *Vanity Fair*. Sykes did poorly at school and university, and fathered a baby by a girl from the estate at only 15, though he was never told. His father hanged his dogs as punishment.

Somehow from this highly disturbed background there stepped out not a neurotic or an alcoholic, but a good-natured, highly intelligent, happy family man of boundless energy and administrative capacity, with a fluent writing style. One can only wonder what he might have gone on to if he had not succumbed in the prime of life to the flu bacillus.

One of the few deficiencies in a book that overall suggests that some of the grandfather's virtues have descended through the generations is a curious lack of empathy about Sykes's Turkish interests. The "Turkish Room" he built in his family home at Sledmere passes unnamed. Kütahya tiles become "Anatolian tiles". Yet the night he fell ill, Sykes spoke of the nationalist movement in Anatolia, suggesting a prescience about Turkey that was then more or less unique in Britain. It was perhaps a glimpse into a future that would be denied him.

THE LURE OF THE ODYSSEY

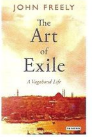
Owen Matthews

THE ART OF EXILE
A Vagabond Life

John Freely
IB Tauris, £20

SPEEDY MOTOR
Travels across Asia and the Middle East in a Morgan

John Carswell
IB Tauris, £25



Exile is the theme of these two marvellous, whimsical new books – or rather the adventures of two remarkable men who chose to exile themselves to the shores of the Levant. They are travellers' tales, but also accounts of lives dedicated to travel. And they are dispatches from the most distant and unattainable land of all – the different country of the past. John Freely and John Carswell lived and loved a Mediterranean world that was vanishing even before their eyes in the 1960s and 70s. The Levantine Greek diaspora, the donkeys and earth toilets, undiscovered beaches, unmade roads and deserted ancient ruins – all these have been largely swept away by mass tourism, by prosperity, and, less happily in the case of Carswell's Lebanon and Syria, by war.

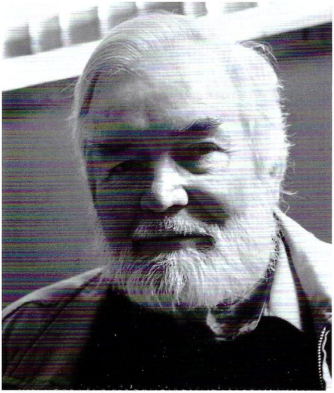
Freely's *The Art of Exile* is the full – and long-awaited – autobiography of one of Istanbul's most remarkable residents. Born into a family of Irish immigrants struggling to make their way in 1920s Brooklyn, Freely crossed the Atlantic four times before his seventh birthday as poverty forced his mother back to Ireland, steerage-class, when they could not makes ends meet.

In Brooklyn the young Freely made pennies collecting scrap on the streets with a handcart. In Ireland he slept with his siblings in the earth-floored room of a cottage inhabited by the family for 500 years, heated by a turf fire and lit by paraffin lamps. The Freelys' arrival in their ancestral village by motorcar marked the first time his playmates had ever heard a car's horn. Entertainment was provided by a fiddle, the singing of old Gaelic songs, and tales handed down from his great-grandfather of a city called Constantinople where the old man had recuperated from his wounds in the Crimean War in Florence Nightingale's military hospital in Üsküdar. Freely's tales of a pre-electric, almost pre-modern rural Ireland are a fascinating reminder that the ancient culture he witnessed disappearing in Turkey and Greece in the 1990s were still living traditions in the West, too, just a generation before.

Freely's determination to educate himself and launch himself into the wide world are humbling. While studying physics he paid his way by working long shifts in a Brooklyn condom factory. As soon as he was able he signed up for the navy, fretting that the Second World War would be over before he had a chance to travel the world. Deployed to China in the last days of the war, he drove a truck over the "Hump" of the Burmese mountains and flew back in a transport plane laden with mules. The GI Bill allowed him to study at Princeton, lecturing to the Nobel-prize-winning nuclear physicist Edward Teller and passing Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atom bomb, mowing his lawn.

But it's Freely's time in Istanbul, where he would spend much of his life, that is most fascinating. Soon after he met his wife Dolores – Toots – the young couple signed a pact in blood that they would spend their life travelling. So when an offer came from Robert College, the American missionary-founded university by Istanbul's Rumelihisarı, to go and teach there, the Freelys set off on what would become a lifelong odyssey.

In many ways the Istanbul that Freely first knew has gone for ever. A flock of sheep grazed by the runway of Atatürk airport. The Boem (Bohème) restaurant in Beyoğlu was full of Greeks dancing and singing the ancient folk songs of the city, Rejans was full of Russian émigrés, and the little restaurants by the side of the Bosphorus were frequented

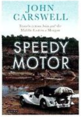


COURTESY OF JOHN FREELY

ABOVE JOHN FREELY, ISTANBUL, 2014. HE ARRIVED IN THE CITY IN 1960 AFTER SIGNING A BLOOD PACT WITH HIS WIFE, DOLORES, THAT THEY WOULD TRAVEL THE WORLD BELOW SAILING TO NAXOS, 1965, WITH DOLORES (FAR RIGHT) AND THEIR CHILDREN: FROM LEFT, THE AUTHOR MAUREEN FREELY, EILEEN AND BRENDAN. FREELY FINISHED MANY OF HIS EARLY BOOKS DURING IDYLLIC SUMMERS ON THE ISLAND by rakı-sipping fishermen. The Freelys, three children in tow, missed no opportunity to travel around Turkey – and saw, returning from Trabzon on the Turkish Maritime Lines ferry *Samsun*, the first waves of Anatolian immigrants crowding the decks, sleeping on giant bags of hazelnuts. It was an exodus from country to city that would sweep away the old Istanbul for ever. In pre-mass-tourism Antalya, they found the taxis were horse-drawn – and did not have to be told where to go because there was only a single decrepit hotel in the whole town.

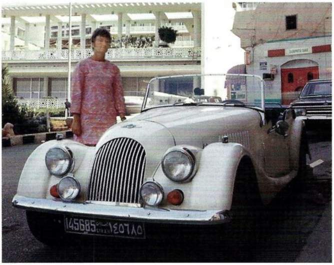
In person Freely is a wonderful talker, a storyteller in the Irish manner. But more importantly he's a good listener, with a gentle good humour and curiosity that allowed him to sit down with Naxiot peasants, Greek gypsies and Nobel prize winners on equal terms. Various luminaries cross Freely's path and are described with imperturbable, wry wit. Yaşar Kemal comes up and plucks a hair from Freely's red beard one drunken night in a Beyoğlu meyhane; Freely walks over to the great Turkish writer's table and plucks a black hair from his chest in return. While crossing the Mediterranean on the Soviet cruise ship *Felix Dzherzhinsky*, a charming Egyptian Air Force major asks for a dance with Freely's young daughter – she stands on his shoes as they perform a slow foxtrot. The officer's name is Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's future president. Rounding Battery Park in Manhattan in 1946 on his way back from the war, Freely, from his station on the flying bridge of a troopship, catches sight of President Franklin D Roosevelt waving to the returning soldiers.

Freely is an impressive scholar, not just of physics but of the literature of the ancient world. He wears his scholarship lightly. But the stories of his travels – as well as his 60 books on the region (at last count) – are suffused with a deep sympathy with the voices of the past, from Sappho to Callimachus of Cyrene and Archilocus of Paros to Homer, whose restless spirit guides Freely's wanderings in the natural and supernatural worlds of the Eastern Mediterranean.



John Carswell's travels occupy some of the same time and space as Freely's, but their spirit comes from a different tradition of British voyager. Carswell is a gentleman scholar in the adventurous mould of Frank Burnaby and Eric Newby. Living and teaching at the American University of Beirut in the 1970s, Carswell combined his twin loves for sports cars and ancient Chinese pottery by embarking on an eccentric trip across the Levant, India and the Maldives in a Morgan sports car in search of blue-and-white porcelain.

The journey is, at heart, a magnificent jaunt. But the scholarly purpose – or excuse – for this odyssey undertaken in the most impractical of vehicles is a fascinating one. The ancient Chinese invented porcelain; the ancient Persians invented blue-and-white glazes. As trade between the two worlds unfolded in the early 14th century the two traditions met and intertwined, with the masters of Chinese porcelain taking to the vibrant new cobalt blue dyes with extraordinary aesthetic results. The great princely collectors of the Islamic world, from Constantinople to Persia and Damascus, also became avid collectors of these prized objects, which the Chinese began creating for export to European markets.



The unexplained mystery that Carswell sets out to solve is how the two worlds met and mingled. And, as he discovers in the course of his travels, the Maldive Islands off the west coast of India were an important staging post for the Arab traders who were the go-betweens between the two great civilisations of their world.

As the great archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler observed, pottery is valuable to historians because it is easy to break but difficult to destroy. Thus the telltale blue-and-white shards lead Carswell on an archaeological detective hunt from Beirut to India. In Sri Lanka, stumbling across sand dunes in the gathering dark, he literally crunches across a trove of Chinese *qingbai* dishes of translucent white porcelain, discarded by a team of workers digging a trench straight through a buried hoard.

But despite the earnest underpinnings of his journey, Carswell's travels are undertaken in an almost schoolboyish spirit of adventure. With his new wife, Peggy, and (remarkably patient) stepchildren in tow, the Speedy Motor of the title trundles and very occasionally speeds across a lost world. The Middle East that he describes is still a courtly, slow-moving place, unspoiled by oil wealth and conflict. India is more recognisable, with its charming chaos and bad drivers (a braking bus near Chickmagalur fatally prangs the Morgan and almost does for its passengers too).

Freely's and Carswell's accounts are charming, but they make for bittersweet reading. They are stories from a more innocent world – a world that is on the verge of destruction by the twin currents of prosperity and chaos. But what one misses most is the sense of a world that is still unimaginably large, and unknown, and mysterious. ◆

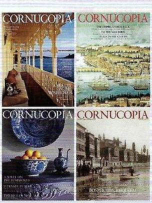
Above John Carswell and his house at Tabarja, Lebanon
Left Peggy Carswell and the Speedy Motor in front of the Beirut InterContinental
Below End of the road for the Morgan in India after running into a bus near Jog Falls

Courtesy of John Carswell

Grand illusion at the Sadullah Pasha Yalı, Çengelköy
Below: Classic finesse at Muharrem Nuri Birgi's Üsküdar yalı

PHOTO: FRITZ VON DER SCHULENBURG

BOSPHORUS BEAUTIES



CORNUCOPIA visits four gorgeous waterside yalıs – the Muharrem Nuri Birgi Yalı, the Germen Yalı, the Ethem Pertev Yalı and the Sadullah Pasha Yalı.

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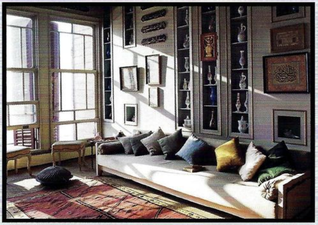
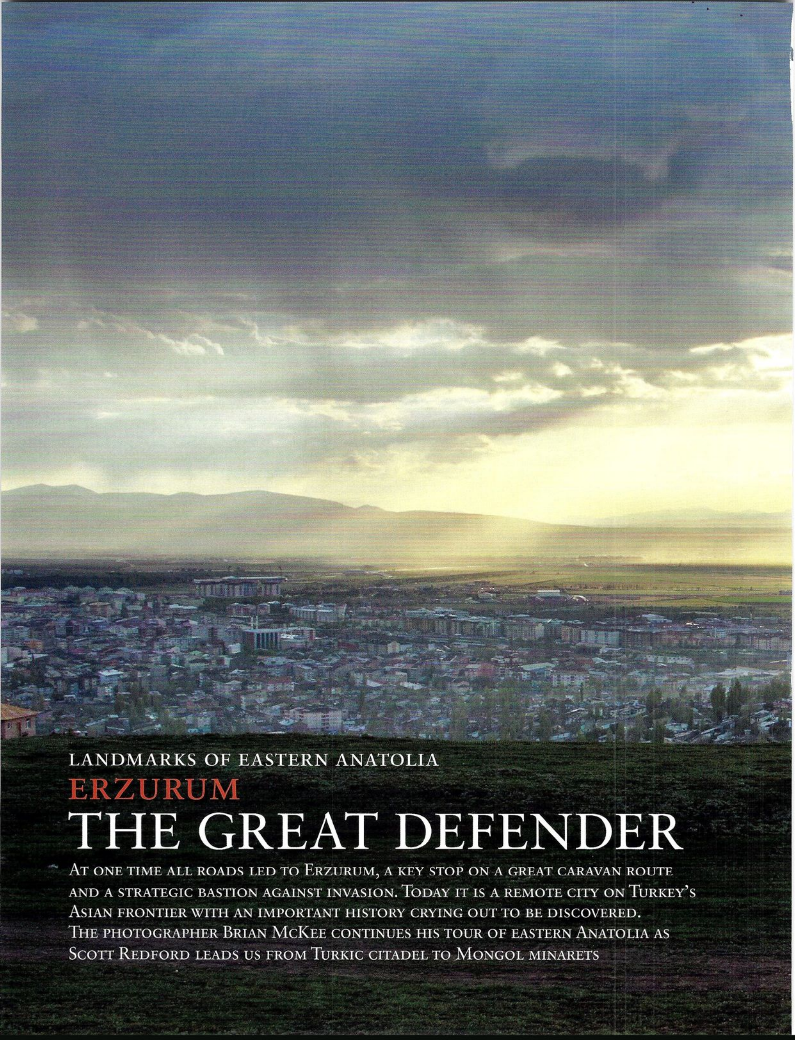


PHOTO: SIMON UPTON

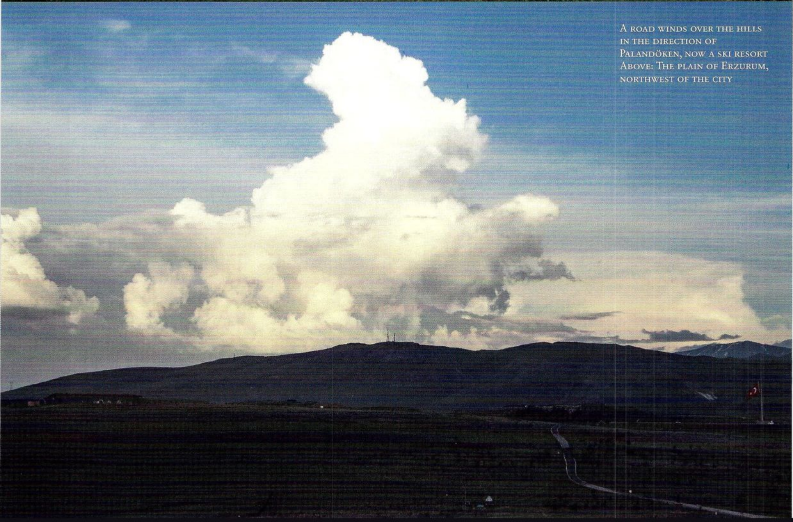


LANDMARKS OF EASTERN ANATOLIA

ERZURUM
THE GREAT DEFENDER

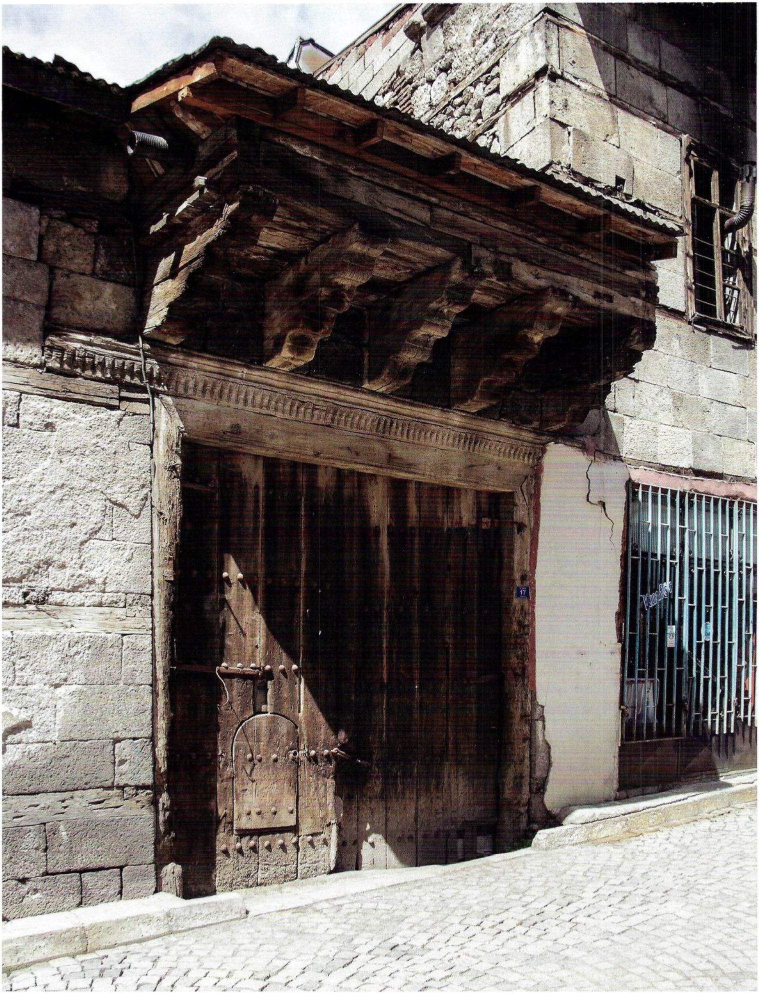
At one time all roads led to Erzurum, a key stop on a great caravan route and a strategic bastion against invasion. Today it is a remote city on Turkey's Asian frontier with an important history crying out to be discovered. The photographer Brian McKee continues his tour of eastern Anatolia as Scott Redford leads us from Turkic citadel to Mongol minarets

The plain of Erzurum seen from the Aziziye fortress. The old caravan route from Tabriz passed this way as it led to the Black Sea over the North Anatolian Mountains



A road winds over the hills in the direction of Palandöken, now a ski resort
Above: The plain of Erzurum, northwest of the city

The Aziziye fortress, in its commanding position on Top Dağı, was built in the 1870s as a defence against the Russians
Below: Looking back to the fortress from the outskirts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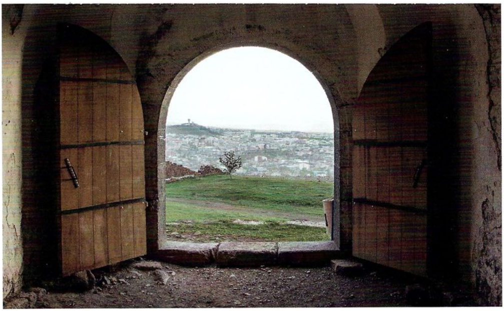


A WALK ON THE OLD SIDE

FORGET THE BLANDER COMFORTS OF THE SKI RESORT NEARBY AND STAY IN THE CITY, WHERE THE HISTORIC SIGHTS ARE A STROLL AWAY

Erzurum is a lonely town, but it doesn't seem to care. It has a superior position and attitude, perhaps owing to its centuries-long role as the guardian of northeast Anatolia against all comers. It sits by itself on a hill in northeast Turkey, its big, broad boulevards whistling with cold in the winter and shimmering with heat in midsummer. It looks north across a broad, treeless plain to the mountains leading to the Black Sea. Just to the south loom the mountains of Palandöken, site of one of Turkey's earliest ski resorts.

Culturally, topographically, gastronomically, Erzurum doesn't belong to the Black Sea, it is not part of the Caucasus, and it is isolated enough from the rest of inland Turkey not to feel generically Anatolian. And those broad boulevards, along with extensive rebuilding after wars and earthquakes, have left its monuments curiously marooned in a city whose historical importance is not otherwise revealed. Today, Erzurum is a regional hub, a garrison and university town, perhaps best known in Turkey for its own kind of kebab (and least loved for its weather, unless you are a skier).

Erzurum is on the way to many places: historically it is the major city on the caravan routes linking Trabzon on the Black Sea with the rest of southwest Asia and beyond, via Tabriz in Iran. Indeed most of its monuments are clustered around the Tabriz Gate, which lies in ruins. Another major gate whose name alone remains is the Gürcu Kapısı, the Georgian Gate. Only the Istanbul Gate remains standing. Erzurum is the next-to-last stop on the train from Istanbul to Kars. And for the modern tourist (that's you and me), it has a cavernous airport, completed a decade ago, on the plain outside town.

Most of its modern hotels are not in Erzurum proper but in Palandöken. However, resist the temptation offered by these better hotels with fully stocked restaurants – you're here to visit Erzurum, after all, not a charmless ski town five miles outside the city. If you do stay in Erzurum, you trade hotel quality for access: pretty much everything is walkable and the sites are all in the upper town, with only the 19th-century forts on the hill opposite.

The centre of town for the tourist is the 12th-century **Ulu Cami**, the central Great Mosque. To one side of that is Erzurum's best-known building, the 13th-century **Çifte Minareli Medrese**. Behind it, five minutes' walk away, outside the old Tabriz Gate, in a soulless park, is what remains of a cemetery with three beautiful 12th- and 13th-century tomb towers, the **Üç Kümbetler**, including that of the legendary Emir Saltuk, founder of the first Turkic dynasty centred in Erzurum, the Saltukids. Five minutes in the opposite direction is the **Citadel**, with its 12th-century Saltukid mosque and minaret. All these medieval monuments display syncretic elements, blends of Islamic, Turkic, Georgian and Armenian architecture unique to Erzurum.

Given its concentration of historic attractions, this part of Erzurum is strangely empty of touts. There are only a couple of mangy carpet shops catering to the foreign tourist trade. However, there is an abundance of tea shops in between or near the monuments, and below the Citadel. Here, for the price of one cup of tea in Istanbul, you can have three or four glasses of *çiçek çayı* – "flower tea", presumably so-called because in Erzurum your normal glass of Turkish tea is served unfiltered, with tea leaves swimming like petals on top. Another Erzurum custom seems to be dying out. *Kıtlama* entails drinking your tea with a piece of hard sugar between your front teeth. You have to hunt for *kıtlama* sugar in the market – you can't expect to find it in a teahouse.

Another five-minute walk, towards the centre of town from the Ulu Cami, brings you to the 14th-century **Yakutiye Medrese**, built when the Mongols ruled.

ABOVE A VIEW OF THE CITY FROM THE AZİZİYE TABYASI

OPPOSITE THE STREETS BELOW THE CITADEL CONTAIN WHAT'S LEFT OF HOUSES FROM THE OTTOMAN PERIOD. THIS WOODEN DOORWAY IS TOPPED BY WOODEN CONSOLES THAT PROBABLY SUPPORTED A BAY WINDOW ('CUMBA') ON A NOW-VANISHED UPPER STOREY. THE MUNICIPALITY HAS RESTORED SEVERAL LARGER HOUSES IN THIS AREA TO SERVE AS CAFÉS AND RESTAURANTS

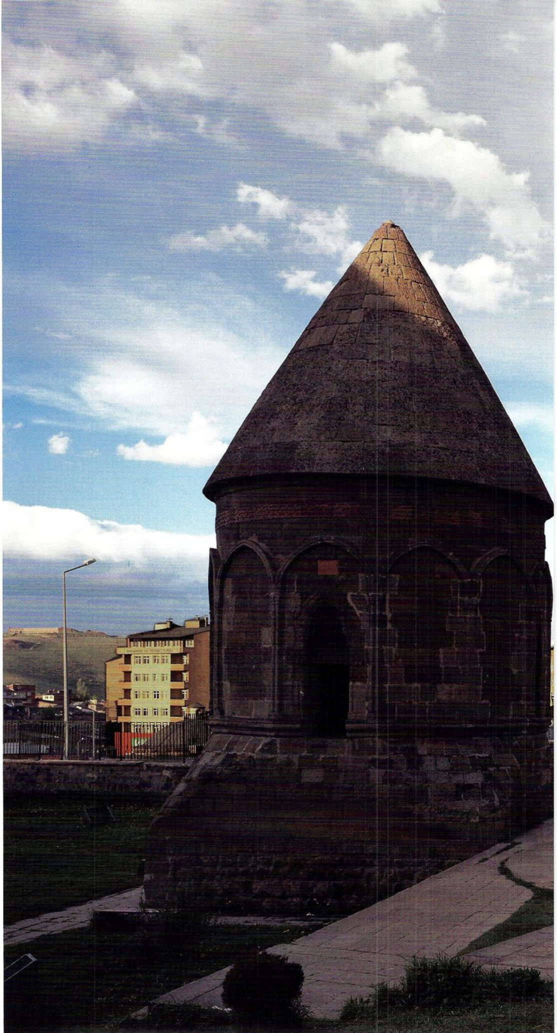
BELOW A HONEYCOMB NICHE IN AN ANONYMOUS 12TH-CENTURY TOMB TOWER SERVES AS A WINDOW

Today it has been transformed into the **Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and Ethnography.**

Until recently one could walk on to the nearby **Archaeological Museum** for finds from earlier eras – Bronze Age and Iron Age – as well as displays relating to the late Ottoman wars with the Russians over Erzurum, which led to three Russian occupations. Sadly, it has now been closed indefinitely.

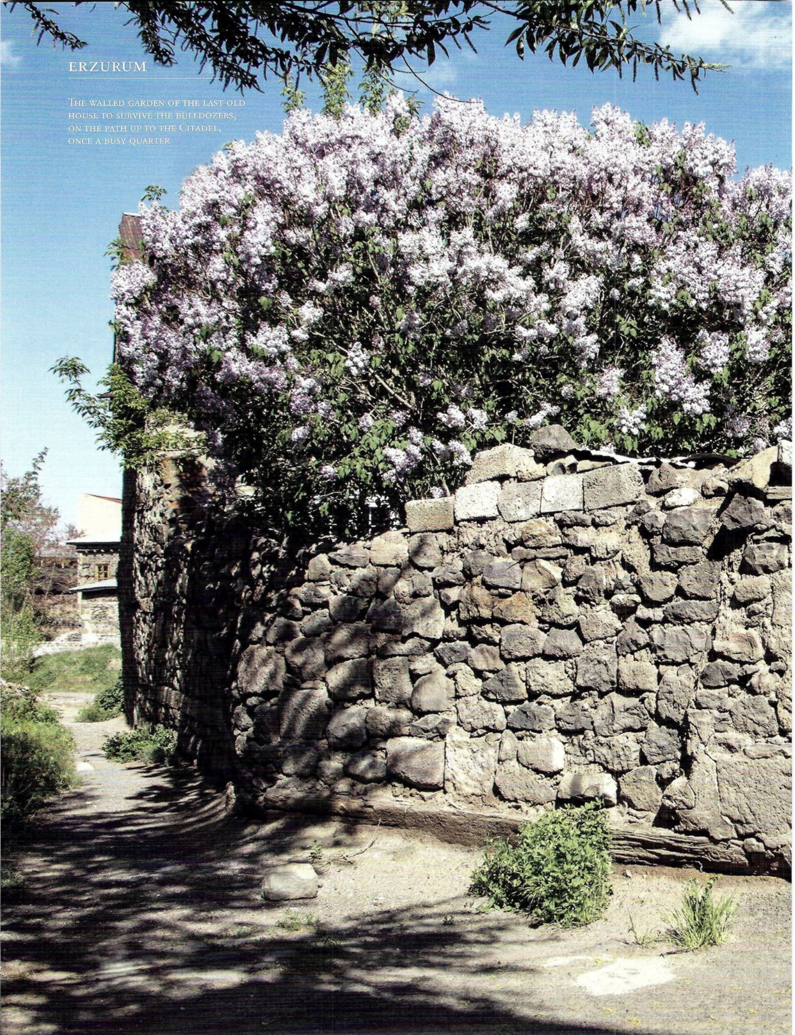
While evidence of the thriving Bronze and Iron Age cultures of northeast Turkey survive in artefacts, there are no standing ruins in Erzurum from before the Middle Ages – in fact from before the 12th century, when the Saltukids set up shop. Here they reigned for over a century until they were swallowed up by the Seljuks, who themselves were swallowed up by the Mongols in the mid-13th century.

The most important Ottoman monument in the city is the **Lala Mustafa Paşa Camii**, dated 1567 and a work of the great Sinan. There's also a 16th-century caravanserai, the **Taş Han**, where you can buy silver jewellery, mostly featuring *oltu taşı*, the local shiny black jet.



ABOVE IN THE 19TH CENTURY THE ÜÇ KÜMBETLER ('THREE TOMB TOWERS') WERE STILL SURROUNDED BY GRAVES. TODAY THE AREA IS A SOULLESS PARK. ON THE LEFT IS THE EARLIEST TOMB TOWER, THAT OF THE 11TH-CENTURY RULER EMİR SALTUK
RIGHT DESPITE THE LACK OF INSCRIPTIONS, THESE TWO TOMB TOWERS HAVE BEEN DATED STYLISTICALLY (BY DIFFERENT SCHOLARS) TO THE 13TH OR 14TH CENTURIES – TO EITHER THE SELJUK OR THE MONGOL PERIOD

ERZURUM



The walled garden of the last old house to survive the bulldozers, on the path up to the Citadel, once a busy quarter

19

SERMONS IN STONE

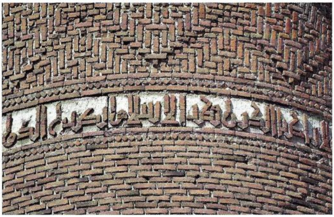
THE 12TH-CENTURY TURKIC RULER EMİR SALTUK BROUGHT A FLAVOUR OF CENTRAL ASIA TO THE CITY. SURVIVING MONUMENTS OF HIS DYNASTY BRING A RARE MIX OF CULTURES TO LIFE

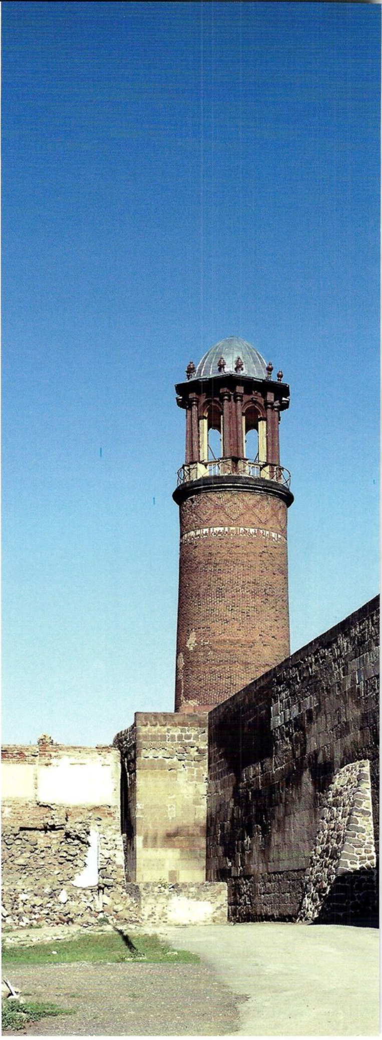
Of the Big Six monuments to visit in Erzurum, four of them date to the 12th-century Saltukid dynasty. Under the Saltukids, Erzurum was an isolated outpost of nascent Turco-Islamic culture in the region. A Turkic elite, the 13th-century geographer Yaqut tells us, ruled over a largely Armenian population. However, this elite's greatest foe was not the Armenians but the resurgent Georgian state, so powerful that one Saltukid ruler's son, in a move that aroused dismay around the medieval Islamic world, apostasised to marry the Georgian Queen Tamar, who reigned from 1184 to 1212.

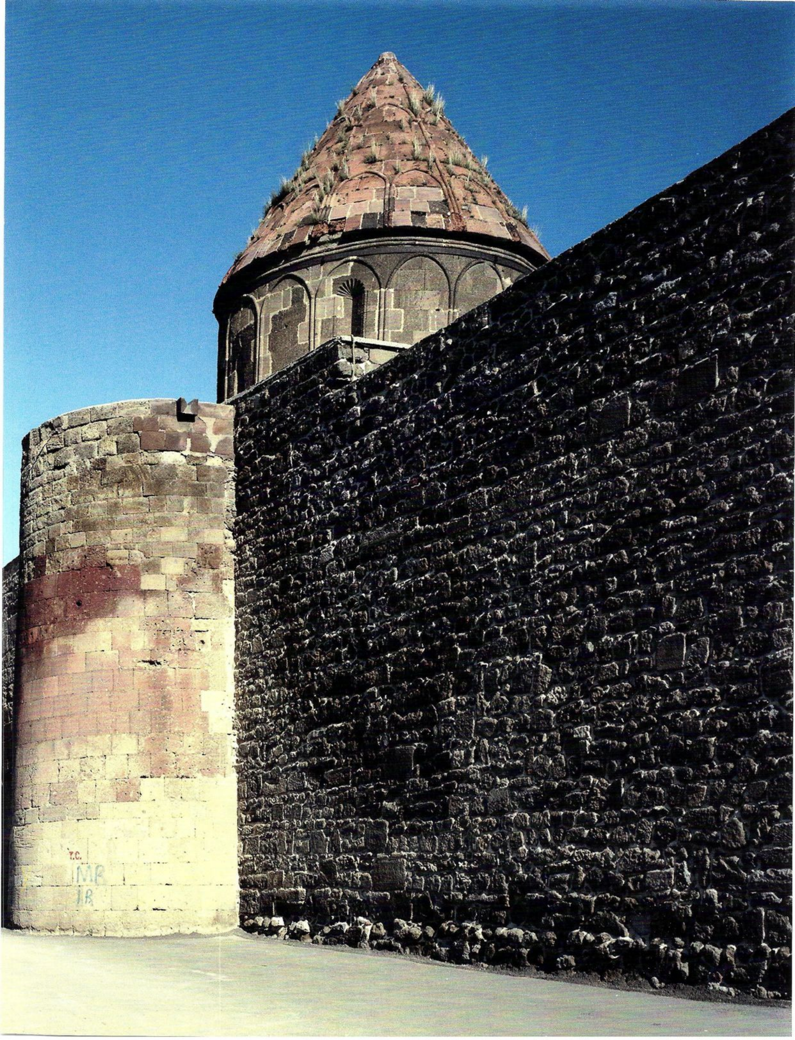
Erzurum's **Citadel** was present before the Saltukids arrived, and continued in use long afterwards: excavations here have uncovered remains of Ottoman garrison buildings. The Saltukid **Citadel Mosque** bears witness to a mixture of medieval cultures. The mosque itself is built into the Citadel wall and topped by a dome whose drum, conical roof and blind arcading recall southern-Caucasian Christian architecture, while the dome's interior bears a feature of Islamic architecture, the three-dimensional honeycombing known as *muqarnas*.

By contrast, the minaret of the Citadel (one cannot say of the mosque, because the two are separated by some distance) references Turkic traditions: it is built of brick, and tapers from base to top, recalling nothing so much as the Karakhanid Kalyan minaret of Bukhara, built about 25 years earlier, in 1127. The Citadel minaret bears no date, but names and titles of the Saltukid ruler Ziyaeddin allow it to be dated to 1155–56. Some of these titles are not of the off-the-rack Islamic variety, but rarely encountered Turkic ones such as "İnanç", "Yabghu" and "Alp". These, too, could be seen

RIGHT THE SOUTHERN WALL OF THE CITADEL BULGES WITH THE MIHRAB OF THE CITADEL MOSQUE; THE ARCADED DRUM AND TUFTED ROOF PEEK ABOVE THE WALL. THE TALL TOWER ON THE LEFT, TOPPED BY A RUSSIAN PAVILION, IS THE MINARET OF THE SALTUKID CITADEL
BELOW THE INSCRIPTION BELOW THE DECORATIVE BRICKWORK DATES THE MINARET TO THE 1150S



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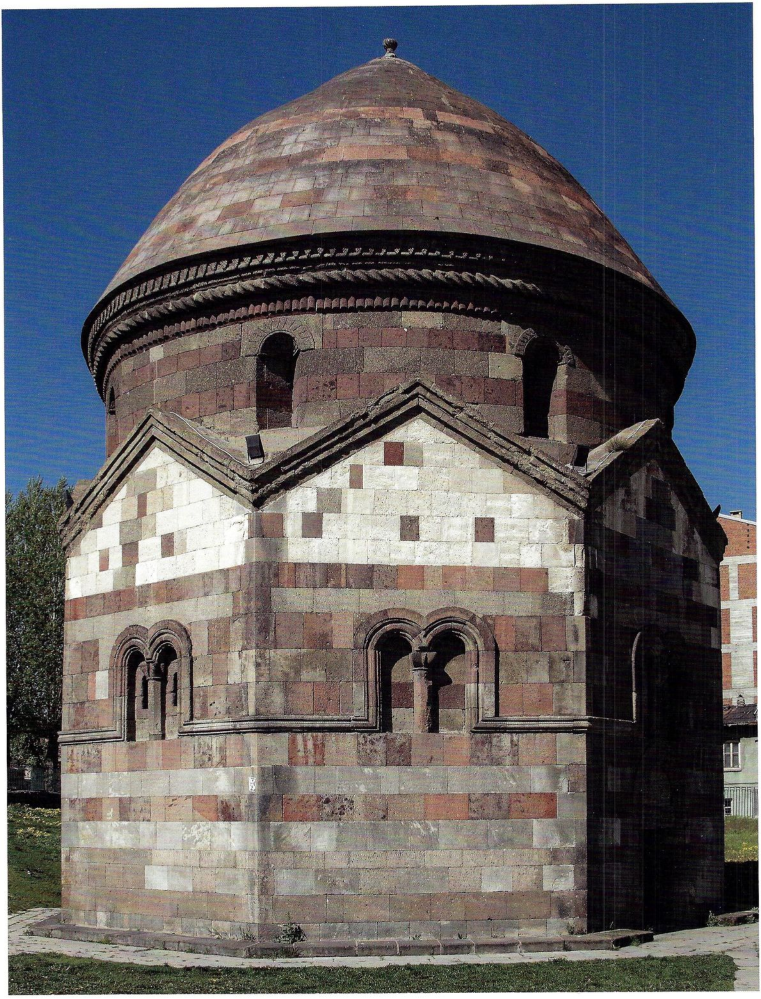
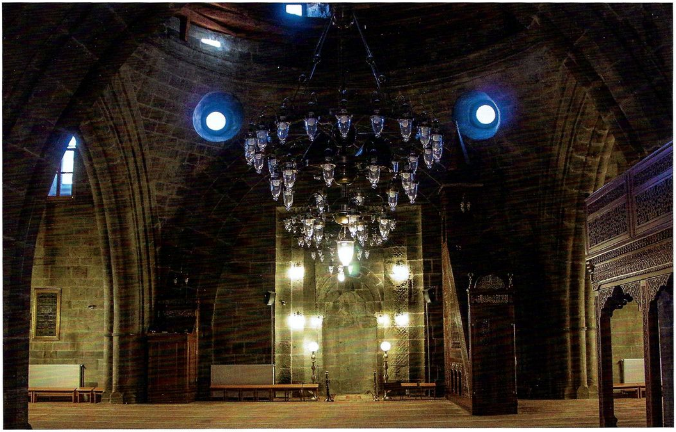
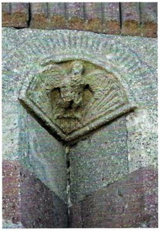






Opposite The tomb tower of Emir Saltuk, founder of the Turkic dynasty that ruled Erzurum from 1071 to 1202, combines Islamic and Georgian Christian traditions Above An angular niche typical of the south Caucasus Top The 12th-century Ulu Cami. Light comes into the grey stone interior from a stacked timber oculus, just visible above

as referring to a Central Asian Turkic identity. However, such is the cultural complexity of the time, and such is the location of this inscription, on Erzurum's highest monument – more of a watchtower than a place for the call to prayer – that the minaret's Turkic titles may have something to do with that most fearsome part of the Georgian army, the 40,000 or so pagan Kıpçak Turks imported from the steppes by the Georgians and only recently converted to Christianity. As you see it today, the minaret is truncated and topped by a Russian-era pavilion, transformed into a clock tower by the Ottomans.

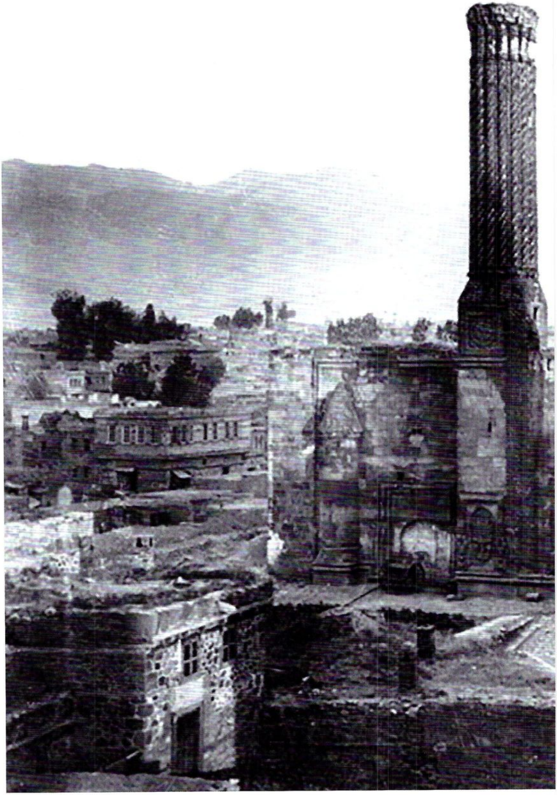
The **Ulu Cami**, the main mosque of Erzurum, is another Saltukid construction, dated by inscription to 1179. A heavy rectangular building of grey stone, it has been rebuilt and repaired so many times that the one outstanding, and probably original, feature is not the usual portal or the *mihrab*, but a stacked *muqarnas*-vaulted oculus in its centre, which lets light into an otherwise dark building. The *muqarnas* vault topped with an oculus is also to be found in the Yakutiye, built well over a century later, as well as in Armenian architecture of the region – for instance, in the narthex of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Ani, dated stylistically to only a couple of decades later.

The last Saltukid monument to visit is almost certainly the oldest. It is an unusual tomb tower in the **Üç Kümbetler** (Three Tomb Towers) cemetery outside the Tabriz Gate, a short walk from the Ulu Cami. Old photographs show the three tomb towers were once part of an extensive Islamic cemetery. Alas, the other graves have been removed, and these three monuments, like all others in Erzurum, stand together in isolation, here in a grassy plot.

The oddest and most endearing of the three funerary monuments stands as the sole representative of the intersection of Islamic and Georgian medieval traditions. It is the legendary **Tomb of Emir Saltuk**, the (also legendary) founder of the dynasty, who died in 1101/2. In contrast to its 13th-century neighbours – which are both more elegant in proportion and more generic in form and decoration – it has squat proportions, sports a bulbous hat, and is built of colourful stone. Around the base of the drum of the dome are those angular niches so typical of medieval Christian architecture of the south Caucasus. Here, as in Georgian churches, the niches are populated with creatures fantastic and otherwise: a dragon, an eagle, a rabbit… It bears the appearance of a tomb made for a Muslim sovereign, but by builders schooled in Georgian architectural traditions.

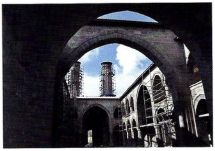
MONGOL MYSTERIES

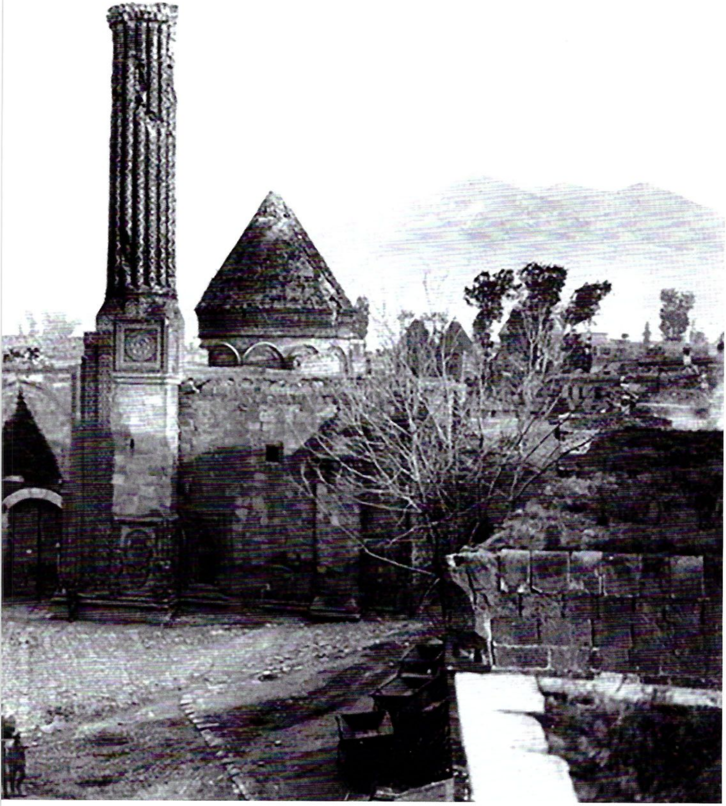
OVERSIZED MINARETS, DRAGONS AND DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLES, A COURTYARD OPEN TO WIND AND SNOW... THE BUILDERS OF THE ÇIFTE MİNARELİ MEDRESE HAVE LEFT US A PUZZLE, AND THE ROLE OF THE YAKUTİYE MEDRESE IS ANOTHER TEASE



By far the most famous building in Erzurum is the **Çifte Minareli Medrese**, so much so that its twin minarets have been twisted into the symbol of the Municipality of Erzurum. It is beautiful, ungainly, unfinished, maddeningly enigmatic and illogical. Undated by inscription or otherwise, it is the source of ongoing controversy as to its patron(s) and date. I plump for a consensus dating it to the third quarter of the 13th century, when Erzurum was under direct Mongol rule. Sometime later in the 13th century, or possibly the early 14th century, a monumental tomb tower, also unfinished, was added to the back of the building. Long out of use as a medrese, a school for Islamic legal and theological instruction, it served as a storehouse for Ottoman armies during the First World War, then as a museum. After its current restoration by the Ministry of Pious Endowments it will house a regional museum.

The very name of the building, the Medrese with Two Minarets, reveals our lack of knowledge about the circumstances in which it was built. Had we known its patron, we could start a controversy of the sort that rages from time to time in the Turkish papers today. "Why," I would write in an accusatory manner to the *Mongol Gazette*, "has a building meant to house students and teachers been designed around a courtyard open to the sky in a city with a climate as harsh as Erzurum's? Is this not a waste of money? Shame!" I might also question the use of large relief sculptures depicting trees and animals and birds – a dragon and a double-headed eagle – on an Islamic building. Why is the building leaning into the city wall next to the Tabriz Gate? Why are the portal and its two minarets (originally up to

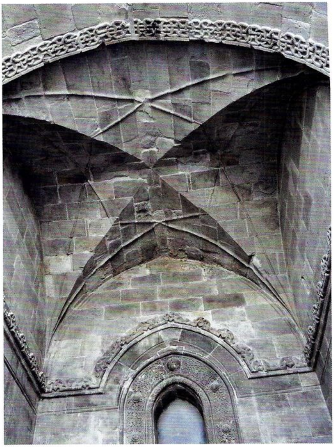


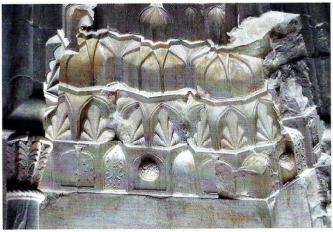


ABOVE The twin minarets of the Çifte Minareli Medrese, widely believed to date to 1250–75, when the Mongols controlled Erzurum.
The tomb tower behind was added soon afterwards

FAR LEFT The entrance portal seen from the courtyard. The building, under restoration for many years, is due to become the regional museum for the Ministry of Pious Endowments (Vakiflar)

Clockwise from top left Details of the 13th-century Çifte Minareli Medrese: a vaulted eyvan ceiling; one of the curious and very large carvings; an unfinished column with strange vegetal decoration; the almost luminous 'muqarnas' cornice in the tomb tower, carved from alabaster

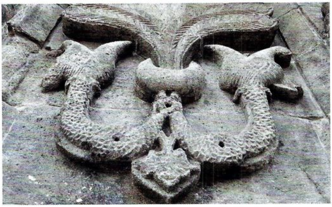


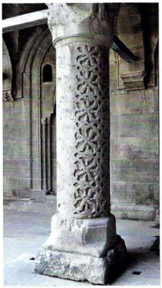


twice their present height) so huge by comparison with the rest of the building? Are they trying to overshadow the Ulu Cami next door? To outdo the Citadel minaret across the way? *Görgüsüzler!* What an upstart of a building!

Make your way through the portal, however large and overwrought it is, and you'll find yourself in a large rectangular courtyard surrounded on three sides by an arcade, seemingly the only concession to the climate. The medrese is built to a four-*eyvan* plan, meaning that the arcades to either side of the entrance are both punctuated by vaulted halls (*eyvan*), decorated with mouldings and other relief carvings of mind-bending complexity of form, density and, yes, playfulness. And this is only a partially completed building: had it been finished, these reliefs, probably painted, would have been overwhelming.

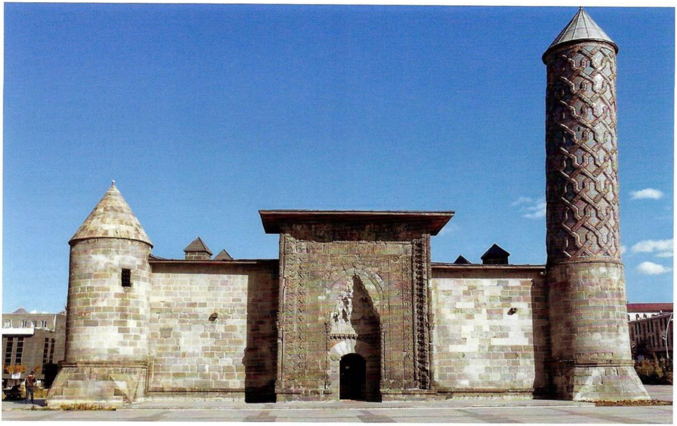
As is the case with much medieval Islamic art, one can often observe an allusiveness in the geometric and vegetal patterns, as if a dragon, lion or other creature might suddenly insinuate itself into life from among them. (Do they? Look hard!) While these two side-halls bear the most accomplished decorative stonework, the inventiveness of the stonemasons working on the Çifte Minareli Medrese can be seen from the carved patterns around each of the doorways to the cells that lie behind the arcade of the ground floor, each different from the next, as well as the (also unfinished) carving on the column shafts of the arcade. Decades after Divriği's Ulu Cami and hospital were completed (see Cornucopia 43), in the Çifte Minareli Medrese we find ourselves in similar territory: within the simple quadrilateral outline of a building, a catalogue of daring invention, a pattern book of seemingly endless possibility and variation.





PHOTOGRAPHS: SCOTT REDFORD

Tear yourself away from trying to figure out these patterns and their intersection with one another, as well as with the architectural forms they decorate, and walk to the end of the courtyard. Here, ascending steps, you pass into another realm, more refined in unity of concept, material (much of the decoration is carved into slabs of creamy, translucent alabaster) and decoration. Who was meant to be buried here? Obviously a person of status. Because one traditional name for the building



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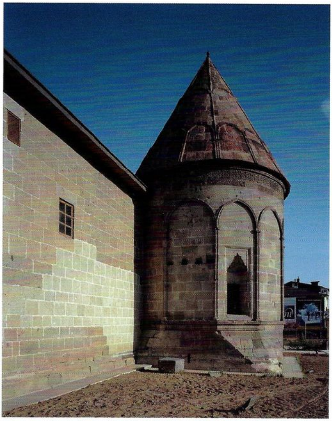
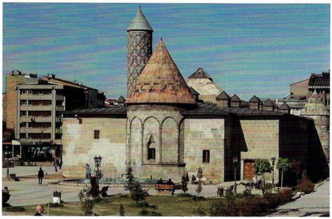
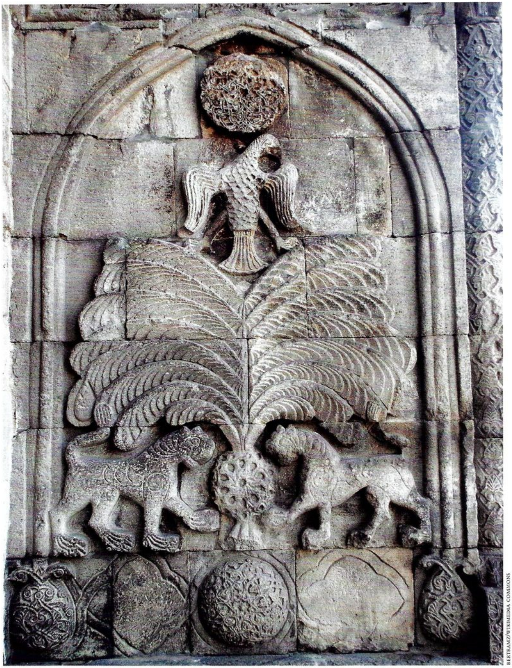




Top Shades of Bukhara? The Yakutİye, built by the Mongol governor, Emİr Jamal al-Din Khwaja Yaqut, in 1310. The minaret's glazed brickwork is laid in a striking pattern Left and above The tomb tower (presumably of the founder) at the back of the Yakutİye. The dedicatory inscription calls the building a place of burial rather than a medrese

is the Hatuniye (built by a *khatun*, or royal woman), speculation abounds as to who that personage might have been, and why her tomb was itself left unfinished.

To my mind, the **Yakutiye Medrese**, a 10-minute walk away, is both more satisfying as a building and less interesting. It draws on both the Çifte Minareli Medrese and the Ulu Cami for its forms, ingratiatingly localising itself, as



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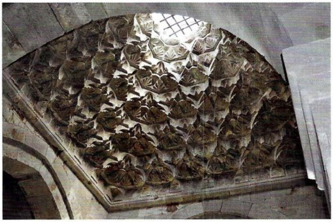
it simultaneously projects the power of the ruling Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty. Recently reopened after an extended renovation, the Yakutiye now serves as Erzurum's Museum of Ethnography as well as of Turkish and Islamic Art.

The Yakutiye was built by an emir, one Jamal al-Din Khwaja Yaqut, in 1310. It is likely that he was the local governor of the Mongol Ilkhanid state. Although it is clearly built to serve as a medrese, with cells around a courtyard (mercifully enclosed, with a stunning *muqarnas* oculus vault in its centre), the foundation inscription of the Yakutiye calls it not a medrese but a *madfan*, or place of burial, and indeed a tomb tower is attached (albeit awkwardly) to the back of the building: presumably the place of burial of Yaqut himself.

One of the *eyvans* of the Yakutiye served as the mosque of the building, and on its walls is inscribed part of the *vakfiye*, the foundation deed of the building. From the description of the lands, baths and mills deeded to the upkeep and running of the building, you get a small sense of the context of the period – not for that ultimately contextless city, Erzurum, but for its hinterland: villages, the countryside, and the town of Bayburt, where many of the properties endowed were located.

The portal of the Yakutiye is inspired by that of the Çifte Minareli. Here, too, are large tree-of-life motifs, although they are flanked by lions. Befitting its later date, the carving of the decoration of the portal is more intricate and smaller in scale, but less original than that of its neighbour.

Above A delicately carved tree of life, flanked by lions, on one of the side walls of the portal of the Yakutİye
Right Muqarnas vaulting in the building's mosque
Opposite The dramatically ornate portal



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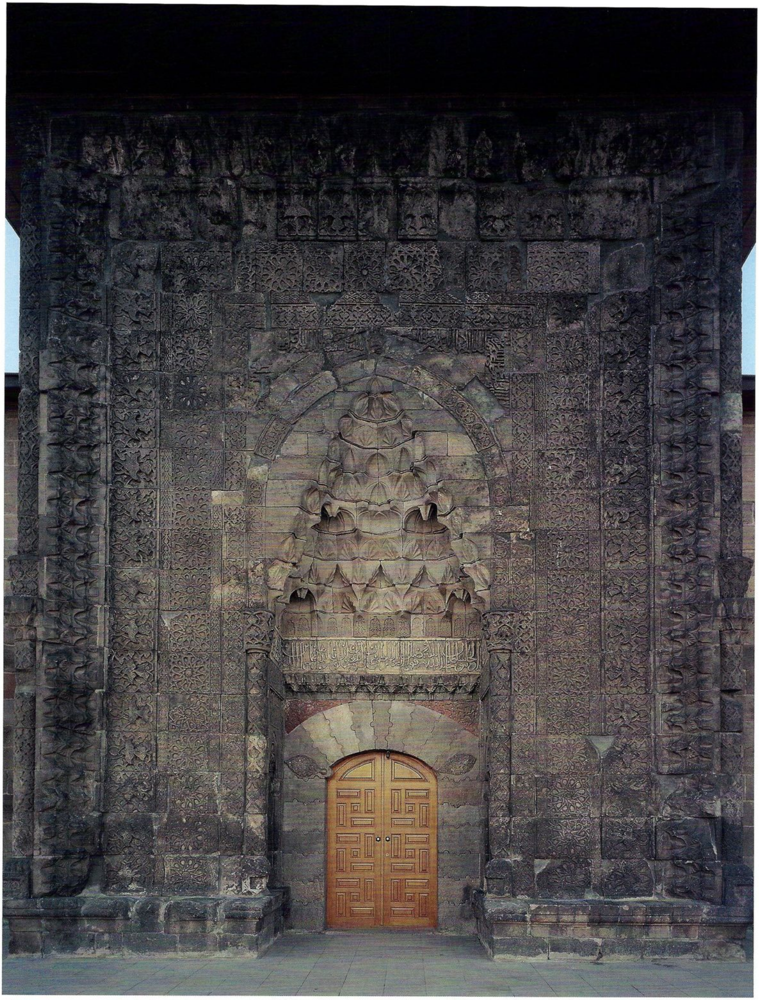
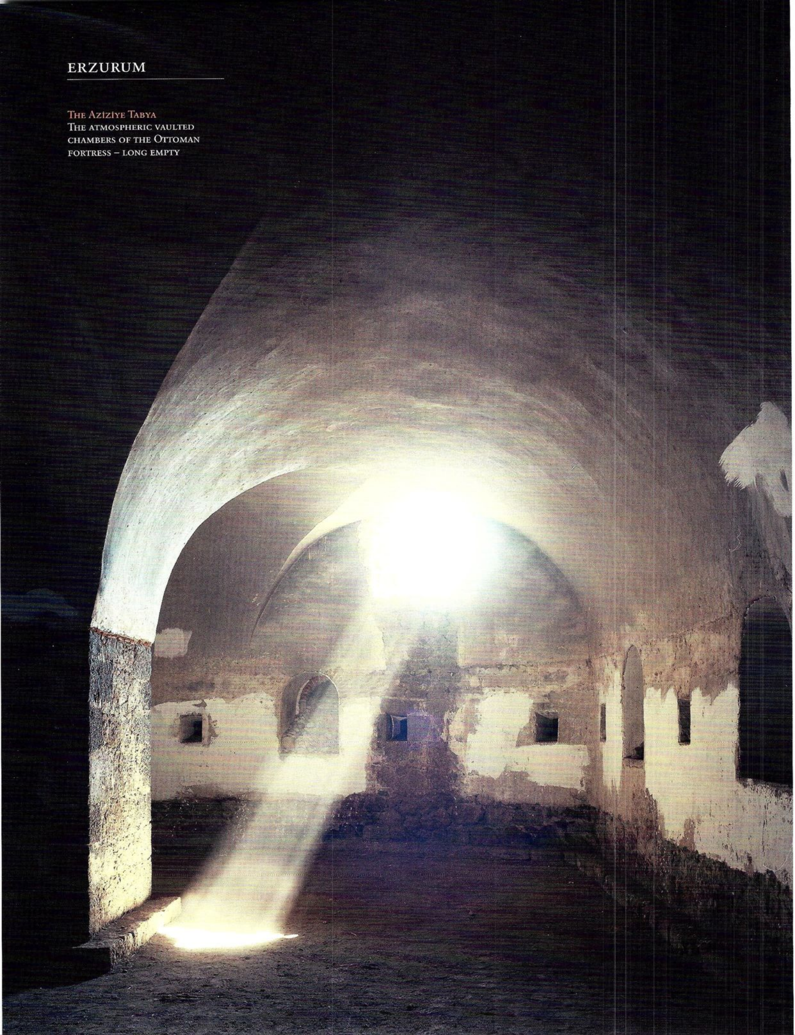


ERZURUM

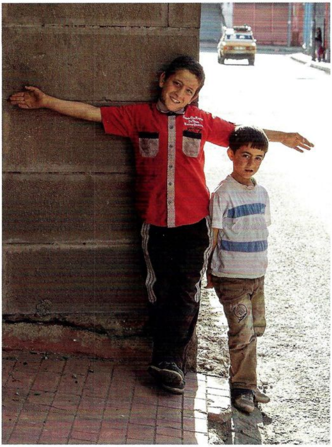
An arc of 11 forts on the heights to the north and east shielded Erzurum against the Russians. The Aziziye Tabya on Top Daği was built by Sultan Abdülaziz in anticipation of the 1877–78 Turco-Russian war. Up to the First World War, the city fell three times to the Russians but was handed back each time. In the last siege, in 1916, 10,000 died in its defence. During the Cold War, Nato code-named Erzurum 'The Rock'

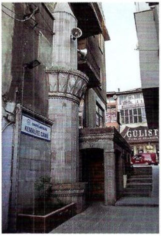


The Azİzİye Tabya
The atmospheric vaulted chambers of the Ottoman fortress – long empty

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TO DINNER

THE CITY'S CHARMS MAY HAVE BEEN LOST ON PUSHKIN, BUT FOR THE MODERN VISITOR THERE IS MUCH TO ENJOY



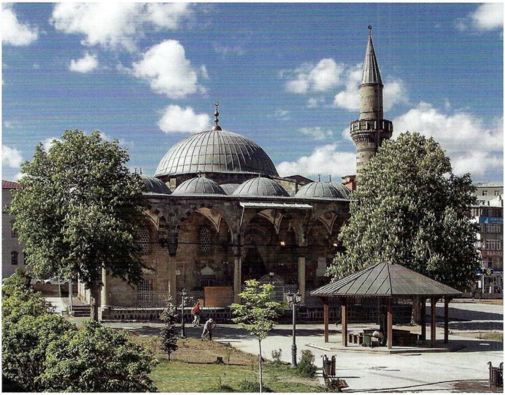


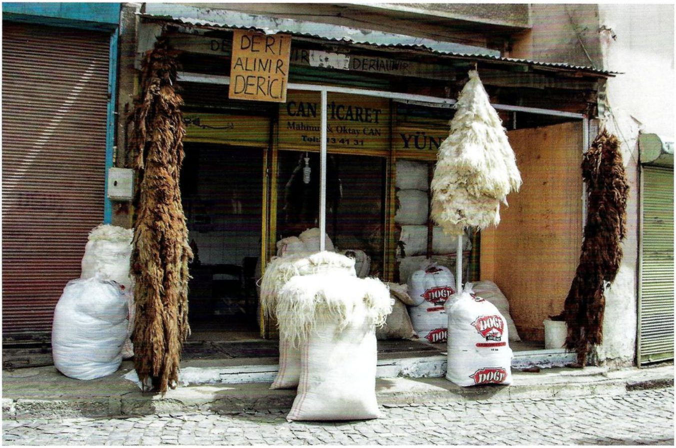
ABOVE A RECENT RESTORATION OF THIS SMALL MOSQUE SAW THE ADDITION OF A MINARET, BUT BECAUSE THERE WAS NO SPACE, IT WAS BUILT INTO THE WALL
LEFT SOME OF THE LOCALS ARE MORE CAMERA-SHY THAN OTHERS
BELOW THE IMPERIAL ARCHITECT SİNAN BUILT THE LALA MUSTAFA PASHA MOSQUE, THE FINEST OF THE OTTOMAN MONUMENTS IN ERZURUM, IN 1562 FOR THE CONQUEROR OF CYPRUS

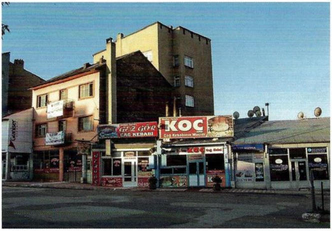
You're bound to pass the **Mosque of Lala Mustafa Pasha**, the conqueror of Cyprus, who came to Erzurum on his way to fight the Safavids, and left behind a mosque built by Sinan notable for its Iznik tiles. But there is another 16th-century gem to discover: the caravanserai of the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, known as the **Taş Han** and now restored as a hall for the sale of locally produced jewellery.

The walls of Erzurum, Ottoman and earlier, are almost completely gone, a victim of the 19th-century wars between the Russians and the Ottomans, although the **Istanbul Gate** can still be seen. However, around Erzurum, as in other late-Ottoman garrison towns such as Edirne, you can visit numerous 19th- and early-20th-century forts. On Top Dağı, just outside the city, you can see the partially restored **Aziziye Fort**, or *Tabya*, built before the Russian war of 1877–78. These *tabyas* give you a sense of the savagery of conflict between the two powers, and explain the state of the city today, with its monuments, heavily curated but few in number, whistling in the wind.

Pushkin (yes, *that* Pushkin) came to Erzurum with the conquering Tsarist army in 1829. His travelogue, *A Journey to Arzroum* (sic), doesn't dally in Erzurum: he found it strange, dark and dirty compared with Tbilisi, and soon left. From Pushkin and other 19th-century travellers we learn that the streets were narrow and crooked, and that it looked strangely green from above, because its low, vaulted dwellings were roofed in sod. Quite different from today.







Top History in a shopfront: a place to buy and sell fleeces. The region was dominated in the 15th century by the powerful Akkoyunlu (White Sheep) and Karakoyunlu (Black Sheep) Turkomans
Above Koç is famous for its marinated lamb. Pushkin grumbled about 'horsemeat, mutton fat and ashy bread'. He would fare better today

EATING IN ERZURUM

Cağ Kebab – a sort of horizontal döner kebab of lamb marinated with onions, basil and tail fat – is, like Bursa's yoghurty İskender Kebab, a fairly recent invention and, like every regional speciality, is sold in restaurants with only one thing to sell. Of all the *cağ* joints in town, which should you walk into? If the celebrity photos are any indication, then **Koç Cağ Kebap** (Nazik Çarşı 8, Kongre Cad. +90 442 213 4547) is the place, although the dry, oxygen-rich mountain air of Erzurum will soon make you hungry again, even after a set battle with the skewers of (outrageously good) *cağ* (which means "spit"). *Afiyet olsun!*

If you tire of spit-roasted meat and fresh bread polished off with sweet sweets, then the only game in town is the **Güzelyurt** (Cumhuriyet Cad 42, +90 442 234 5001). Luckily it's centrally located, close to the Yakutiye. The Güzelyurt is the sole representative in Erzurum of a dying breed: a "classy" restaurant in a building dating to the early years of the Republic that serves a variety of food, all well made. The tablecloths are white, the waiters legion. And for the thirsty, it serves beer, wine and rakı. In fact, it's the only place in Erzurum for the hungry and the thirsty among us.

Apart from the Güzelyurt restaurant, how does Erzurum deal with foreign tourists who would like a rakı or a glass of wine or two with dinner? Erzurum subscribes to the "solution" of the past few decades that one finds all around Turkey: build hotels outside town, bus the tourists there, and have them eat and drink in their hotels. At Erzurum this solution has its own rationale: Palandöken, that (charmless) ski town just outside the city. ◆

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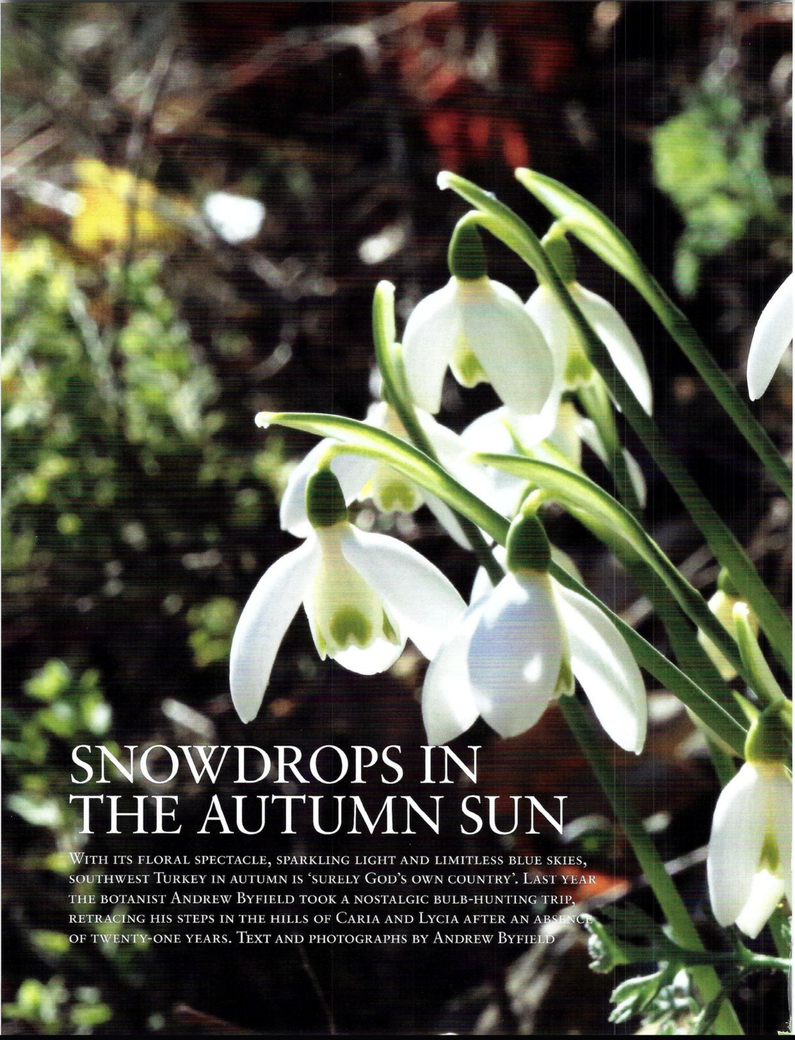
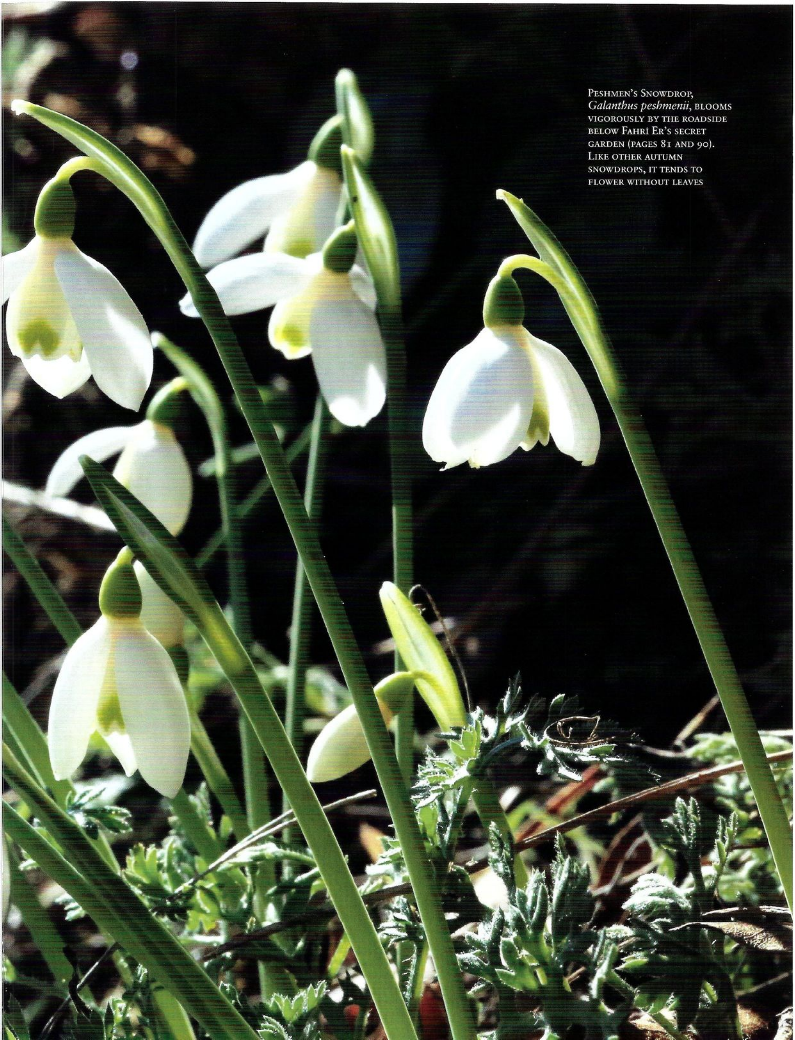
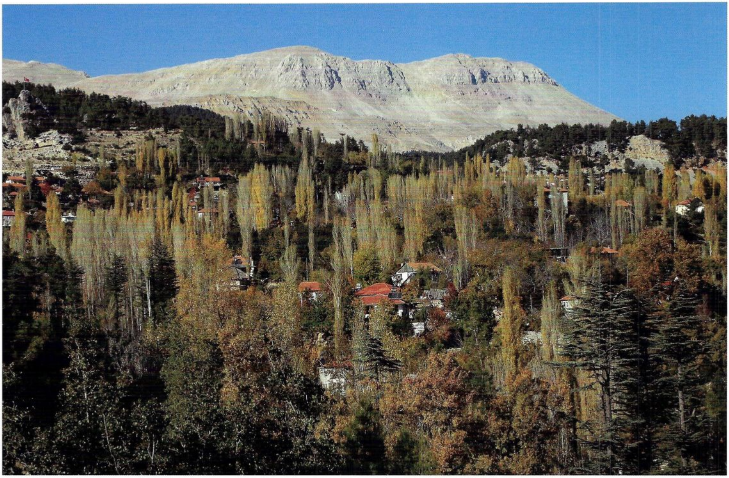


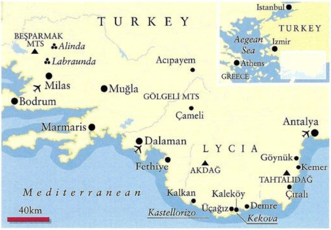
SNOWDROPS IN THE AUTUMN SUN

With its floral spectacle, sparkling light and limitless blue skies, southwest Turkey in autumn is 'surely God's own country'. Last year the botanist Andrew Byfield took a nostalgic bulb-hunting trip, retracing his steps in the hills of Caria and Lycia after an absence of twenty-one years. Text and photographs by Andrew Byfield



Peshmen's Snowdrop, *Galanthus peshmenii*, blooms vigorously by the roadside below Fahri Er's secret garden (pages 81 and 90). Like other autumn snowdrops, it tends to flower without leaves

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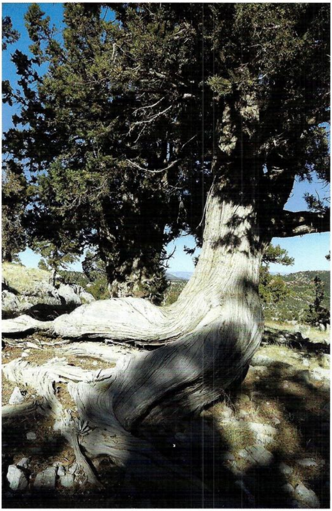
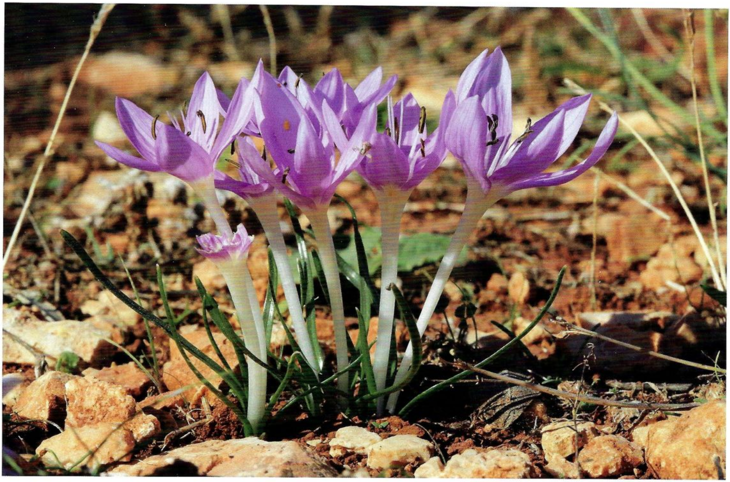
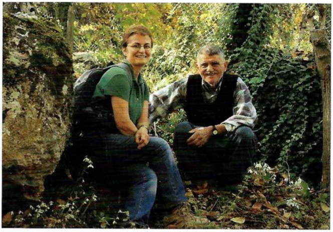
BEŞPARMAK MTS
Alinda
Labraunda
Milas
Bodrum
Muğla
Acıpayem
GÖLGELİ MTS
Çameli
Marmaris
Dalaman
Antalya
LYCIA
Göynük
Kemer
Fethiye
AKDAĞ
TAHTALIDAĞ
Çıralı
Mediterranean
Kalkan
Kaleköy
Üçağız
Demre
Kastellorizo
Kekova
40km
Istanbul
TURKEY
Aegean Sea
Izmir
Athens
GREECE

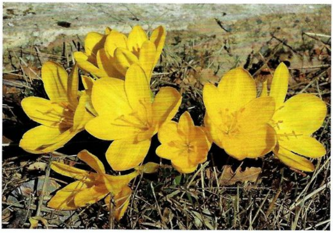
SUSANNA HICKLING

For the botanist or gardener in the Mediterranean, the year starts not in January, but in September or October as autumn rains moisten summer-droughted soils, and as dormant seeds are stimulated into life. Many travellers to Aegean or Mediterranean hills might be surprised to find crocus, cyclamen and even snowdrops flowering profusely in the autumn sun, triggered into growth by moisture, falling temperatures or shorter days. I well remember first witnessing this great floral spectacle in the mid-1990s, and it was a real delight to retrace earlier steps along Turkey's Carian and Lycian shores last autumn, in the company of Sema Atay, my former partner in crime at the Turkish Society for Nature Conservation, on a delicious, if all too short, 21st-anniversary road trip.









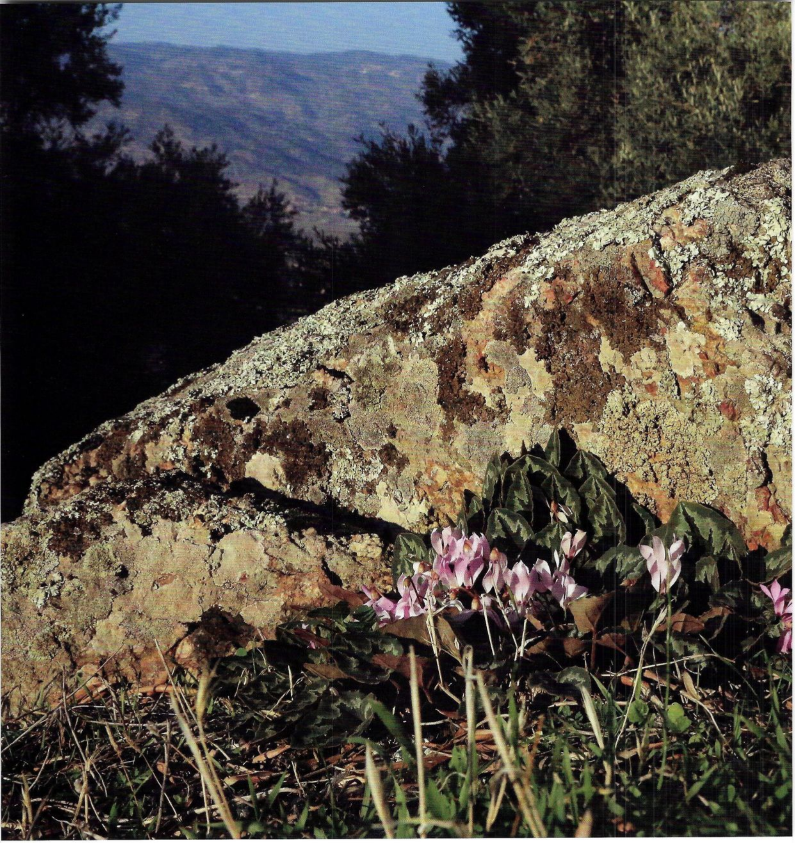
OPPOSITE, TOP AT ÇAMELİ, ON THE ROAD FROM ACIPAYAM TO FETHİYE, YELLOWING POPLARS AND CEDARS OF LEBANON STAND OUT BENEATH THE BROODING LIMESTONE BEHEMOTH OF AKDAĞ

BOTTOM GNARLED BY THE HARSH CLIMATE, INFERTILE GROUND AND BROWSING BY LIVESTOCK, JUNIPERS THRIVE IN THE HIGH TAURUS, OFTEN ON ROCKY SLOPES ABOVE THE TREELINE. THEY CAN LIVE FOR CENTURIES. ONE *Juniper foetidissima*, KNOWN AS THE 'LION JUNIPER', IS ESTIMATED TO BE 1,700 YEARS OLD

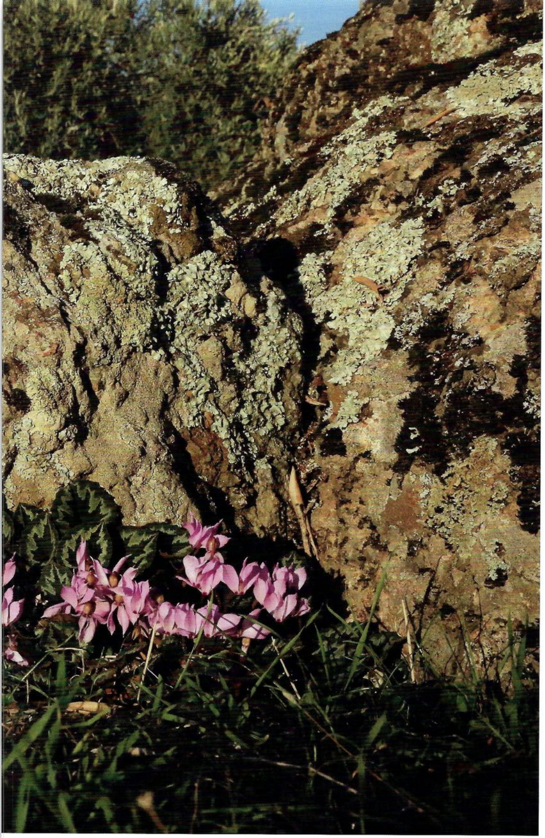
THIS PAGE, TOP SCATTERED WIDELY ALONG TURKEY'S SOUTHERN SHORES, THE MEADOW SAFFRON *Colchicum stevenii* IS LOCALLY ABUNDANT, ITS SHORT STATURE ALLOWING IT TO SURVIVE IN CLOSELY GRAZED LIMESTONE AREAS. COMMONLY BUT ERRONEOUSLY CALLED AUTUMN CROCUSES, MEMBERS OF THE GENUS *Colchicum* ARE IN FACT COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO TRUE CROCUSES, SUCH AS *Crocus nerimaniae* (PAGES 83 AND 85) AND *Crocus mathewii* (PAGE 85)

ABOVE LEFT THE BOTANIST SEMA ATAY WITH FAHRİ ER, WHOSE GARDEN HIDDEN HIGH IN THE TAURUS MOUNTAINS IS HOME TO VIGOROUS CLUMPS OF PESHMEN'S SNOWDROPS

ABOVE RIGHT *Sternbergia lutea* IN A ROADSIDE GRAVEYARD IN THE GÖLGELİ MOUNTAINS

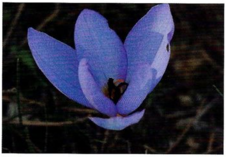


Above Highly localised in nature, *Cyclamen mirabile* is seen flowering here close to the ruins of Alinda. The species is noted for its round leaves with scalloped margins, often flushed beetroot-red when young, and its soft-pink 'shuttlecock' flowers, frequently fringed along their upper margins. Once threatened by the wholesale collection of tubers for the European bulb trade, this cyclamen is now at greater threat from the growing extraction of china clay in the Beşparmak Mountains



Our trip starts north of Milas in the Beşparmak Mountains, which rise dramatically above the city. A few small roads wend their way into the hills here, and heading north we soon arrive among vast rounded boulders of granite, each patinated to a rusty brown from age-old weathering; many dwarf the few village houses that populate this area. Throughout the landscape, stone pines predominate, their leaden green, rounded canopies perfectly mirroring the stony protuberances to create a dramatic, yet surprisingly friendly, landscape.

We spot our first bulbous plants. The highly localised *Cyclamen mirabile*, with its neat posies of softest pink "shuttlecock" flowers above a ruff of kidney-shaped leaves, is widely scattered through these hills, even springing from the rockwork of the ancient city of Labraunda. Growing in the dappled shade of scattered pines, the lavender-blue *Crocus nerimaniae* is also common locally – and a particular treat to see, as this recently discovered species is named after Professor Neriman Özhatay, our long-time collaborator and friend



ABOVE RIGHT
Crocus nerimaniae IS A RECENT DISCOVERY, CONFINED TO THE MOUNTAINS NORTH OF MILAS, WHERE IT IS A FEATURE OF SHORT GRASSLAND. NOTABLE FOR ITS SOFT LAVENDER-BLUE FLOWERS AND SHORT BLACK ANTHERS, THIS CROCUS WAS NAMED IN 2004 AFTER PROFESSOR NERİMAN ÖZHATAY, A WORLD AUTHORITY ON THE VAST GENUS ALLIUM. RECENTLY RETIRED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ISTANBUL, SHE HAS ADDED MANY NEW SPECIES TO THE TURKISH FLORA

at the University of Istanbul.

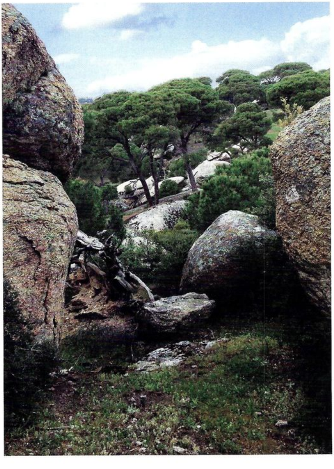
But things have changed since our first visits a couple of decades ago. The very processes of weathering that have created this fantastical landscape of jumbled rock have also given rise to vast deposits of kaolin (china clay), and the trees and hillsides are being systematically stripped, with not a thought for the unique landscapes and plants lost.

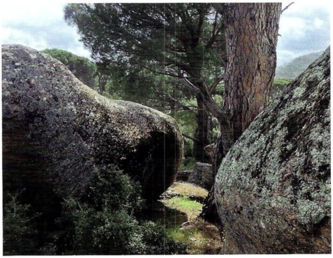
We travel south and east, gaining altitude as we head inland from Muğla. Here the forested hills assault our senses. Southwest Turkey in the early autumn is surely God's own country, for its sparkling clarity of light, and for the ever-changing warmth and chill as the car passes from illuminated to shaded, a world apart from the enervating heat of summer past. Colours take on a brilliance in this clean artist's light, be it the gleaming white of newly laid limestone road chippings, the whispering butter-yellow leaves of the aspens, or that illimitable blue of the skies above.

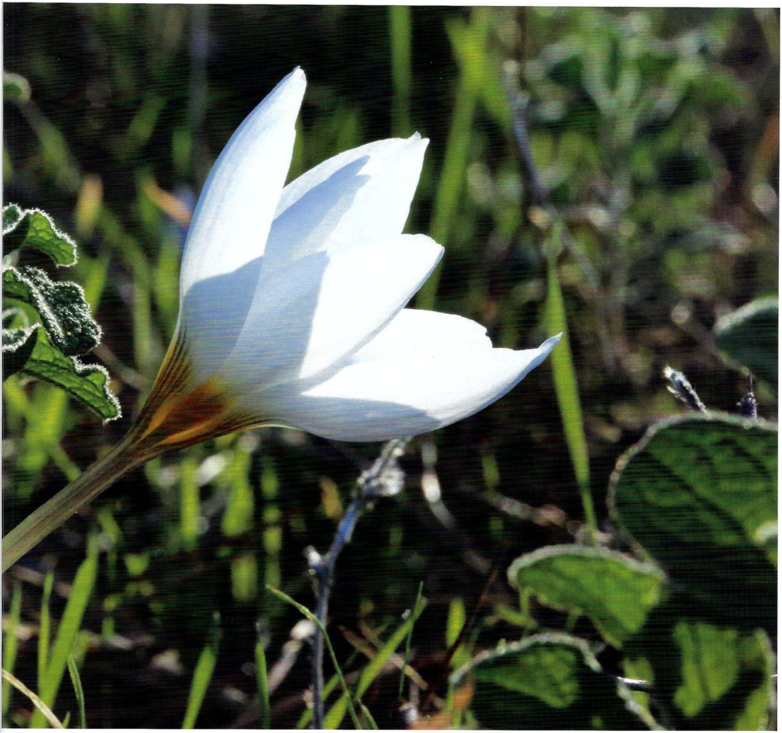
As we head into the heart of Lycia, the brooding limestone behemoth of Akdağ (White Mountain) is ever present in the corner of the eye: this 30km-long barren upland ridge rises to more than 3,000 metres. Surely little visited by botanists, it offers new treasures to those willing and able to penetrate its valleys and ridges.

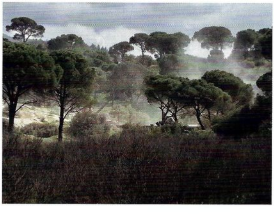
Below the barren summit ridge, a dark tideline of vegetation marks the treeline – the natural upper limit – of very special forest, for all the mountains in this region are clothed in the densest cedar-of-Lebanon woodland. While I am told that just a few hundred mature trees survive on the slopes of Mount Lebanon itself, Turkey is surely its true home, for it occurs along the southern flanks of the Taurus Mountains in countless tens of thousands, with the most monumental specimens of all surviving in the western end of the range, here in Lycia.

As we head south and lose altitude, we start to notice









Far left and left The rounded canopies of stone pines echo the shapes of granite boulders north of Mîlas. Very restricted in Turkey, stone pines are most common in these mountains, where they are harvested for their valuable crop of pine nuts

Above Normally a pale lavender blue, the white *Crocus nerimaniae* is extremely rare in the wild and would be a very desirable prize for European gardeners. This particular plant grows unmolested in a secret spot in the hills above Mîlas

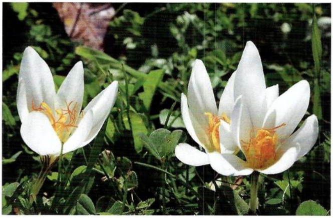
Left The fly in the ointment: trucks heaving kaolin out of the newly denuded landscape create destructive, if atmospheric, clouds of dust

many of the crocuses in which the area is so rich. The appropriately named *Crocus cancellatus* ssp *lycius* now becomes a constant companion, distinctive on account of its milk-white petals encircling rich gold stigmas, whose thread-like lobes are split and split again into a wispy tangle of fine filaments, like the wind-frayed end of a length of cord. And on the approaches to Kekova we start picking up small colonies of perhaps the finest of all, *Crocus mathewii*.

Sema and I could be accused of bias, for this species was named in 1994 after another friend, Brian Mathew, who joined us on a number of Turkish bulb-hunting jaunts over the decades. But bias aside, what a beautiful thing this crocus is, flaunting goblet-shaped flowers white as water-buffalo cream, each liberally blotched at its heart with a generous daub of imperial purple, and finished off with three warm orange stigma lobes.

This species had been discovered in the 1980s, and soon more conservation-minded botanists were expressing concern that the few known colonies were being plundered by bulb collectors to supply novelty-hungry specialists in Europe. Sema and I also come across a worrying scattering of holes in one colony – but what we witness is not the fiendish activity of greedy foreigners but the work of locals, who prise the bulbs from the ground, give them a quick rub to remove excess soil and pop them in their mouths as a tasty morsel!

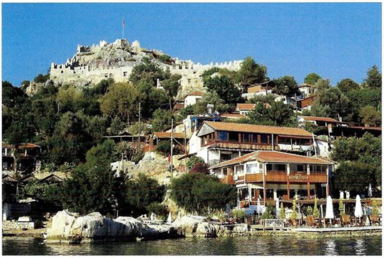
In the past we never took the opportunity to visit the island of Kekova, but this time round we make amends, and arrive with the aim of undertaking a bit of plant-sleuthing. If, like us, you haven't visited Kekova, it really is a must. After delicious food and beer in the village of Uçağız, we are soon heading out over gently rippling waters to the island with our obliging Deniz Kaptan. Our challenge is to find the snowdrop *Galanthus peshmenii* here, for it is known from north-facing cliffs on the island

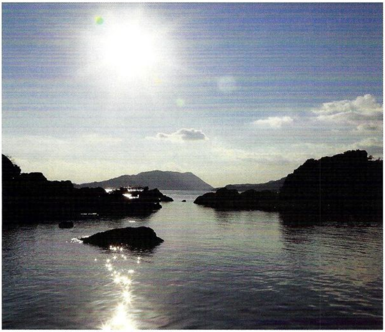


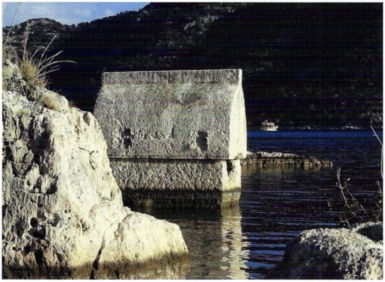
ABOVE CONFINED LARGELY TO THE ANCIENT PROVINCE OF LYCIA, THE MILK-WHITE *Crocus cancellatus* SSP *lycius* IS FREQUENT IN PINE WOODLAND AND OPEN GRASSLAND ALIKE. THE STIGMA OF CROCUS SPECIES IS OFTEN THE KEY TO IDENTIFICATION: IN THIS SPECIES, THE RICH ORANGE-GOLD STIGMA IS DIVIDED MANY TIMES INTO A FINE TANGLE OF THREADS

TOP LYCIA'S WOODLAND OF STONE PINES, WHERE THIS AUTUMN CROCUS GROWS IN ABUNDANCE

OPPOSITE IN THE HILLS BEHIND KEKOVA AND KALKAN THE ENDEMIC *Crocus mathewii* GROWS IN HEAVILY GRAZED LIMESTONE GRASSLAND. THIS SPECIES WAS NAMED IN 1994, AND SOON BECAME A MAGNET FOR UNSCRUPULOUS COLLECTORS – YET IT MAY BE AS MUCH UNDER THREAT FROM LOCAL VILLAGERS, WHO DIG UP THE BULBS AS A TASTY SNACK







of Kastellorizo, a short distance to the west, and in the high cliffs surrounding Tahtalı Dağ, towards Antalya to the north and east, so surely it should occur in suitable habitat over the intervening kilometres? We guess that the steep north-facing slopes of Kekova island would give us our best chance, and soon we are scanning cliff and slope above, rather than the sunken ruins of ancient Dolichiste below, to see what we can spy.

Protected since 1990, the slopes of the island are clothed in fine maquis, dominated by grand domes of the tree spurge *Euphorbia dendroides*, and the first white flowers spied prove to be lovely bunches of the tazetta narcissus, here flowering remarkably early. Then a squeal of delight indicates success, for we find a few clumps of our Peshmen's Snowdrop, new to Kekova, growing out of wafer-thin cracks in the hard limestone rock.

Our final leg on this short yet intensely enjoyable trip takes us up into the gorges and mountains west of Kemer and Göynük, part of the Beydağları (Olympus) Coastal National Park. Here rust-red serpentine rocks and gleaming white limestones come together in a dramatic skewbald landscape of cliffs, gorges and peaks, all clothed in magnificent natural forests of Aegean pine.

Cutting inland from Kemer, we pass through the natural limestone "gates" of the Kesme Boğazı canyon before following summer-parched streams flanked by dense forest high into the hills around the village of Gedelme.

Here and there, lonesome Oriental planes pick out springs, and here in the cool shade we find the first flowers of our snowdrop alongside the dramatic *Crocus wattiorum*, endemic to these parts and first described as recently as 1995 (if you are starting to see a trend here of recent discoveries, a back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that a plant species new to Turkey is discovered every eight days and 14 hours).

Drier spots by the roadside boast the most dramatic displays of *Cyclamen maritimum* (formerly *Cyclman graecum* ssp *anatolicum*), with candy-pink flowers and near-perfectly-round leaves in reptilian livery, each as distinct from the next as snowflakes or fingerprints.

But we are keen to reach a small garden high in the mountains that we discovered for ourselves all those years ago, for here Peshmen's Snowdrop occurs not as singletons but in lusty clumps, like the spring snowdrops of a

West Country English garden.

The snowdrops are still flourishing, flowering incongruously under the golden leaves and withered fruit of autumnal vines. Now in his eighties, the owner of this little corner of paradise, Fahri Er, is still in residence. He remembers our visit 21 years previously, and after chatting and moseying among his flower-filled terraces, we bid him farewell, looking forward another couple of decades or so until we meet again. ◆

For more articles on Turkey's wild flowers and where to find them, see cornucopia.net/botany

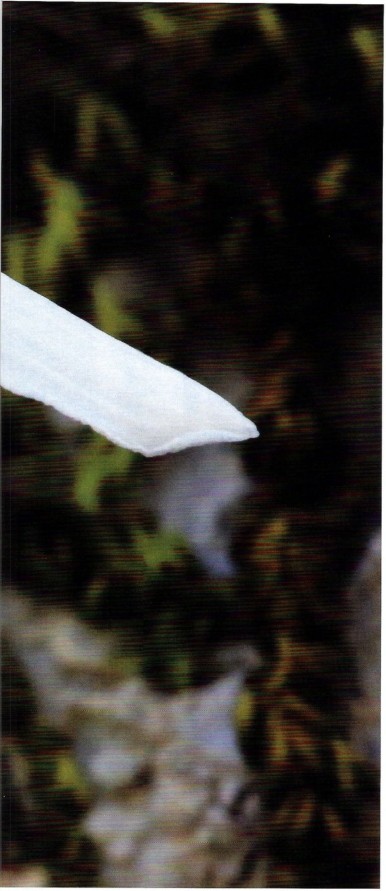
Andrew Byfield lived in Turkey for ten years and was closely involved with plant conservation, including identifying key plant sites and encouraging villagers to produce wild-flower bulbs sustainably by artificial propagation and cultivation

OPPOSITE, TOP THE VILLAGE OF KALEKÖY, OPPOSITE THE ISLAND OF KEKOVA. THE BYZANTINE CASTLE WAS BUILT AS A DEFENCE AGAINST PIRATES

CENTRE THE SUN SETS OVER KEKOVA. BELOW THE WATER LIE THE RUINS OF DOLCHISTE, A CITY DESTROYED BY AN EARTHQUAKE IN THE 2ND CENTURY AD

BOTTOM A LYCIAN SARCOPHAGUS AT KALEKÖY. THE VILLAGE IS SURROUNDED BY DOLCHISTE'S PARTLY SUBMERGED NECROPOLIS

ABOVE SEMA ATAY PHOTOGRAPHS *Galanthus peshmenii* IN KESME. AT FIRST SIGHT, THE PLANTS ARE FAIRLY UNIFORM IN APPEARANCE, BUT SUBTLE VARIATIONS IN THE MARKINGS ON THE INNER 'PETALS' – AND RARELY THE APPEARANCE OF GREEN MARKINGS ON THE OUTER PETALS – DESERVE CLOSER STUDY. IN THE EXAMPLE OVERLEAF, THE INNER MARKING IS SPLIT INTO TWO, LIKE THE HOOF PRINT OF A DEER OR GOAT, WHILE THOSE ON THE OPENING PAGES OF THIS ARTICLE ARE ROUGHLY HEART-SHAPED



Left A *Galanthus peshmenii* (Peshmen's Snowdrop) with rare 'hoof print' markings

Below New to science in 1995, *Crocus wattiorum* is confined to the Tahtali Mountains southwest of Antalya, where it often grows alongside Peshmen's Snowdrop, favouring limestone outcrops and cliffs in cool pine woodland. Its blue-purple petals, black anthers and rich orange-red stigmas (like those of the saffron crocus) make it especially prized, and bulbs have been traded illegally since its discovery. A plant new to Turkey is found almost once a week, cementing the country's reputation as one of the richest places for wild plants in the temperate world

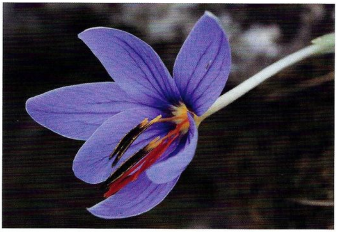
Bottom Abundant in the Tahtali Mountains, *Cyclamen maritimum* grows at low altitudes down to sea level, in the warm dappled shade of open pine forest. Beautiful both in flower and leaf, it is notable for the enormous variation in its 'reptilian' leaf markings, each plant as different from its neighbour as snowflakes or fingerprints

Travel notes

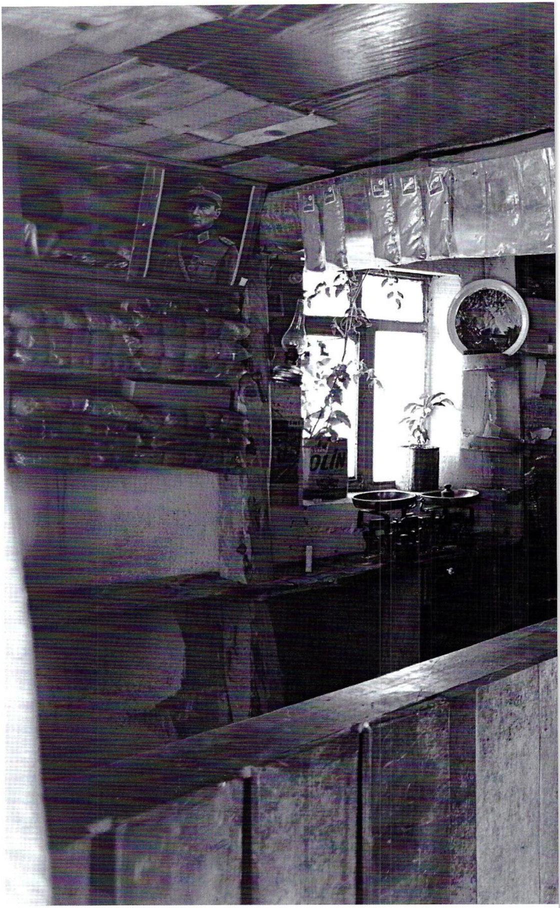
Sema and I made our journey over five days in mid-November, travelling east from Bodrum to Antalya. Cars can be hired at airports, though it is best to book. If you want to drive on rougher tracks and minor roads, some of the smaller cars (and especially their tyres) may not be up to the job. We hired a Nissan Qashqai, which performed very well.

Our trip took us inland for two days, with a further three following the coast east of Kalkan. All medium and larger towns will have reasonably priced 2- or 3-star hotels, and the coast has small hotels and *pansiyons* in tourist areas such as Kalkan and Çıralı, where we stayed, though by November some are closing for the winter. It may be hard to book ahead, but we have never had major problems finding a place for the night. This late in the season, prices should be low.

The autumn bulb season is at its best in late October and much of November. We were blessed with glorious weather, but be prepared for rain – in which case the consolation will be even better displays of flowers.



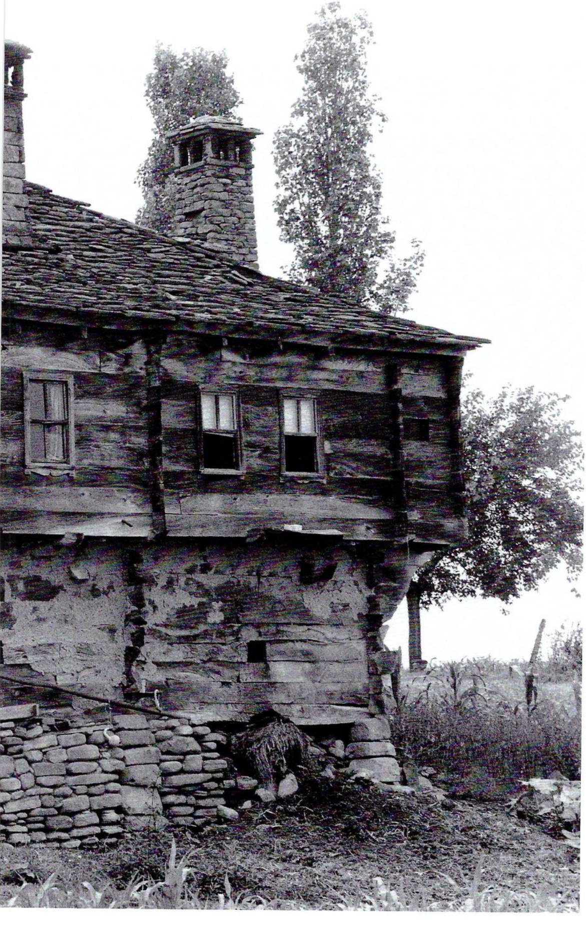
THE VILLAGE GROCERY IN BEYKÖY, NEAR AFYON
WESTERN ANATOLIA, OCTOBER 1981
Burak, the winged horse that carried the Prophet Mohammed to Heaven, and a portrait of Atatürk hang from the ceiling. Veysseyre took a series of photographs in the village while French archaeologists surveyed a possible Hittite site nearby



THE FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER PAUL VEYSSEYRE HAS DEVOTED DECADES TO DOCUMENTING TURKEY. TAKEN FROM THE SECOND VOLUME OF HIS TURKISH TRILOGY, THESE STRIKING IMAGES FROM THE 1970S AND 1980S – AND HIS COMPANIONS' VIVID MEMORIES – ARE A HYMN TO ANATOLIA, THE WILD BEAUTY OF THE LAND, THE DIGNITY OF ITS PEOPLE, AND THE SIMPLE GENIUS OF THEIR DWELLINGS

THE SOUL OF THE STEPPE

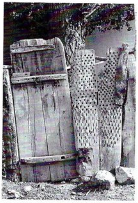
KIZGIN ADAM



LEFT A BLACK SEA FARMHOUSE WITH FLAGSTONE ROOF, ÇATALZEYTİN

KASTAMONU, AUGUST 1987

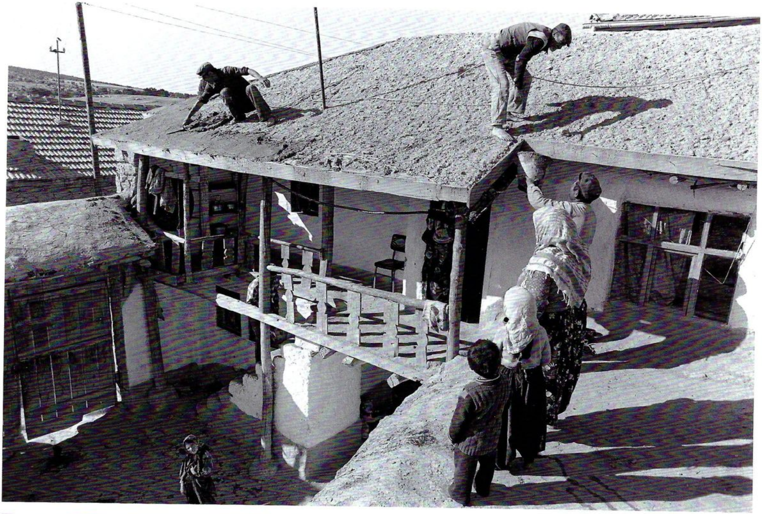
From his home in Lyon, Veysseyre returned to Turkey time and again after his first visit in 1971, when he drove 20,000km in three months. 'The real wonderment,' he recalls, 'began with the wooden architecture of the Black Sea coast.' The protruding beams stretching from end to end, the 40cm-wide planks of the walls and floors, and the flagstone roof in this house are designed to withstand storms and earthquakes. Animals and farm equipment are kept downstairs

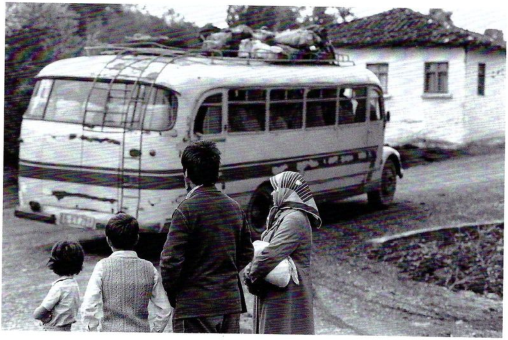


ABOVE A DOOR MADE FROM TWO OLD THRESHING BOARDS IN THE VILLAGE OF AKŞAR

GÜMÜŞHANE, AUGUST 1987

The heavy threshing board (*döven*), drawn by an ox or donkey, is used to separate grain from straw; the underside is encrusted with flints in the front and small coarse lava blocks behind. The door on the left is the top side of the *döven*, the right-hand one the underside





Above Repairing a roof’s clay coating before the autumn rain, Beyköy
Afyon, October 1981
Veysseyre joined Beyköy’s villagers in this task, delighted to put down his camera and get his hands dirty

Left The local bus sets out from the village of Taşpinar
Bursa, September 1980
Kemal Tetik, a worker at the Renault car factory in Bursa, and his family see off the young people from Bursa who have come to lend the village a helping hand

Opposite top
Ploughing on Mount Karacadağ
Urfa, February 1986
The slopes of this flattish volcano are where wheat was first domesticated 9,000 years ago and many cereals still grow wild. The photo was taken at Karabahçe, on the road from Diyarbakır to Urfa, as it was starting to snow

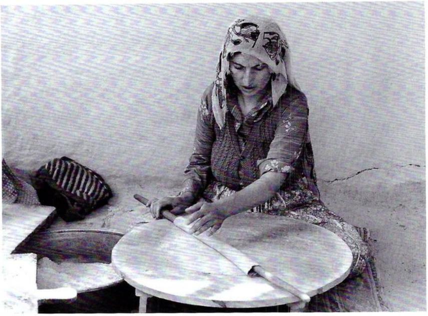
Opposite below
Harran’s mud-brick ‘beehive’ houses
Urfa, September 1981
High beds, or *tahta yatak*, are used for sleeping in the open air in summer with a sheet draped over the corners for privacy. The town occupies the Roman fortress of Carrhea

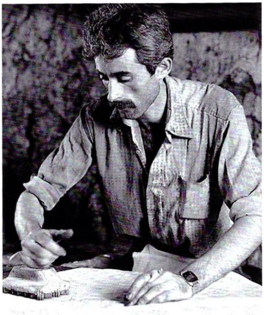
BELOW AND BELOW RIGHT SCENES IN TOKAT'S GAZİOĞLU HAN
TOKAT, AUGUST 1987
The Gazioğlu Han in northern Turkey, now demolished, was famed for its hand-printed cottons. Ünal Sulugöl is seen applying a block. The courtyard was used to rinse and dry the fabrics

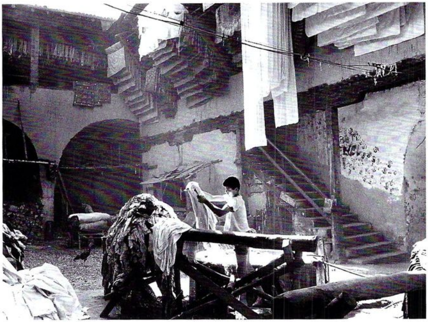
BOTTOM LEFT A LOOM AT A HOUSE IN SARIDÜZ
ÇANAKKALE, OCTOBER 1991
A kilim weaver shelters from the rain near Assos

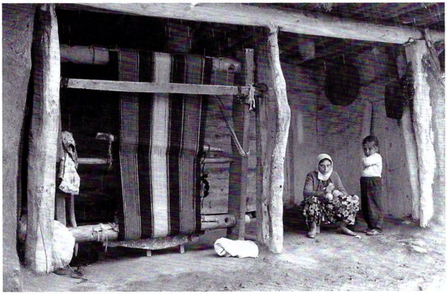
RIGHT ROLLING DOUGH FOR YUFKA IN ESKİ MALATYA
MALATYA, APRIL 1981
Veysseyre spent a peaceful hour watching women roll paper-thin dough for flatbread with an *oklava* on a low table, or *senid*

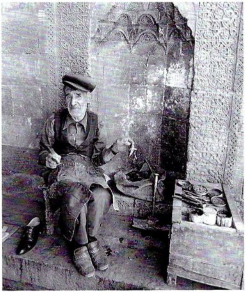
BOTTOM RIGHT A COBBLER AT THE DELİLLER HAN
DIYARBAKIR, SEPTEMBER 1981
A well-heeled clientele would find this old man at his stall every day at the 16th-century caravanserai

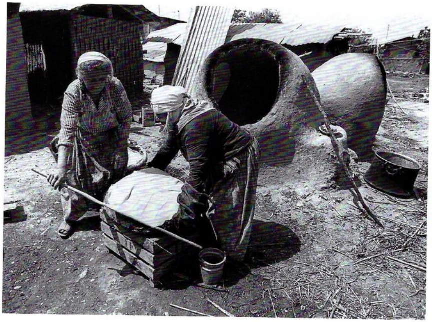












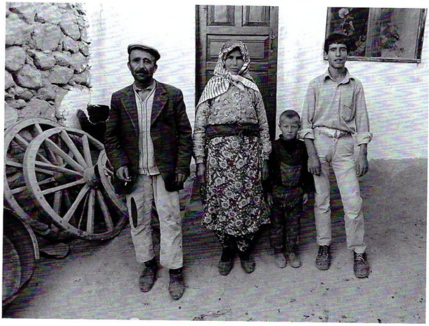
LEFT BAKING YUFKA IN A TANDIR OVEN IN HAVUTLUKÖYÜ
ADANA, MAY 1982
A delicate job performed by older women in the marshy delta south of Adana. One woman lays the very thin dough on a cushion. The other, wearing thick gloves, must slap it on the wall of the oven – timing is all

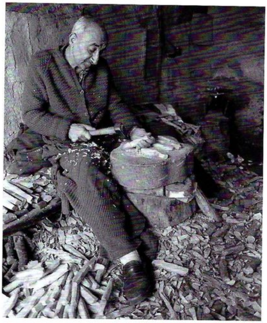
BELOW AN ELDERLY CRAFTSMAN CARVING KNIFE HANDLES IN OSMANELİ
BİLECİK, MAY 1989

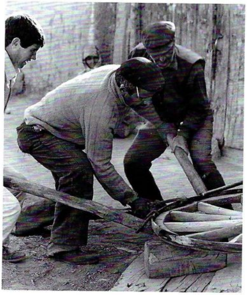
BELOW LEFT
ONE FOR THE FAMILY ALBUM – A FARMER WITH HIS WIFE AND SONS IN THEIR COURTYARD
AFYON, OCTOBER 1981

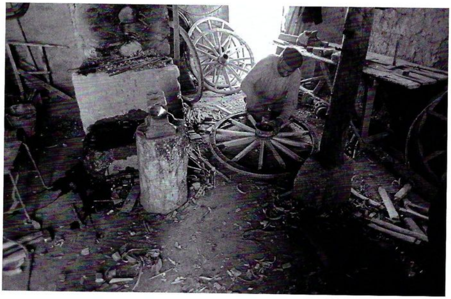
BOTTOM LEFT
HOOPING A CARTWHEEL
AFYON, OCTOBER 1981

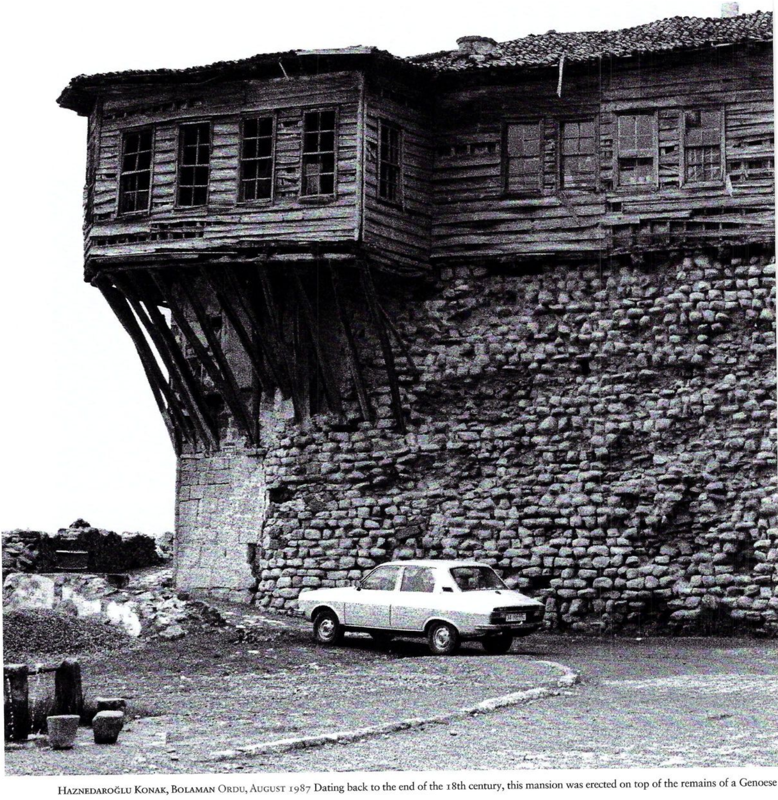
BOTTOM RIGHT
THE WHEELWRIGHT IN HIS WORKSHOP
AFYON, OCTOBER 1981



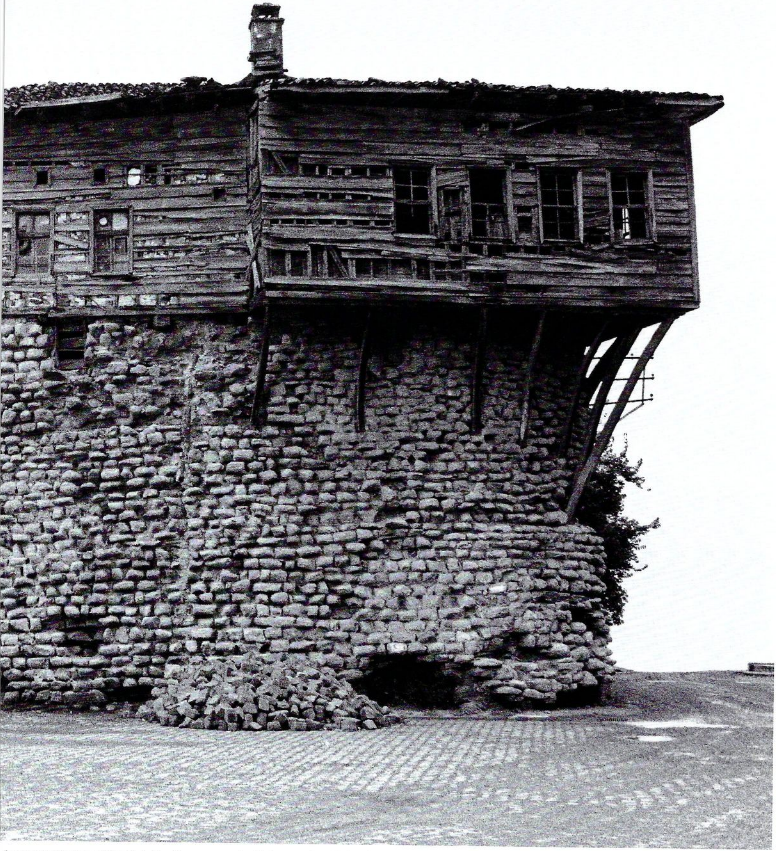




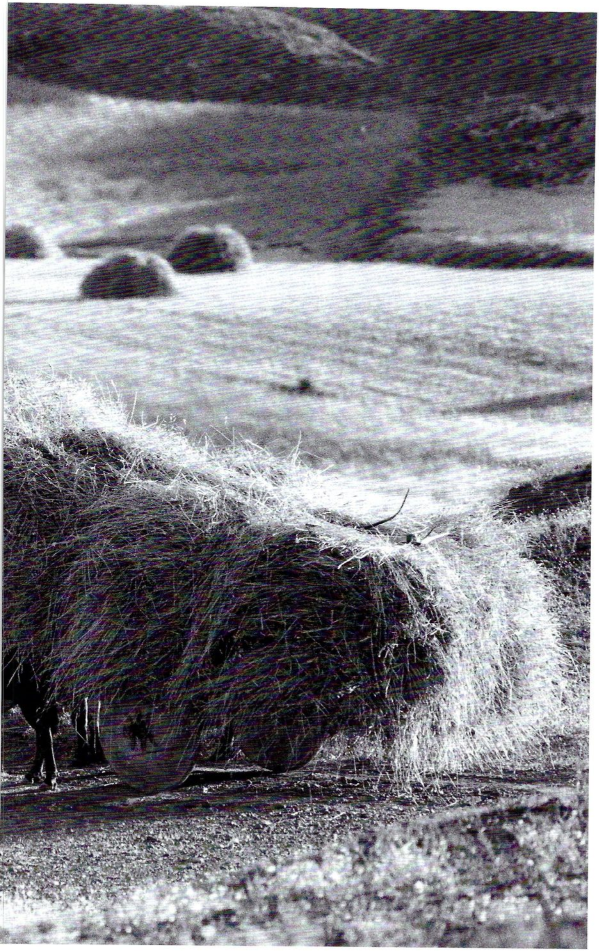




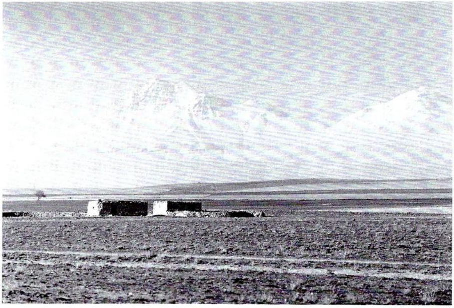
Haznedaroğlu Konak, Bolaman Ordu, August 1987 Dating back to the end of the 18th century, this mansion was erected on top of the remains of a Genoese

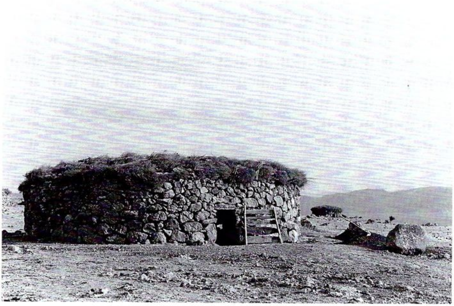


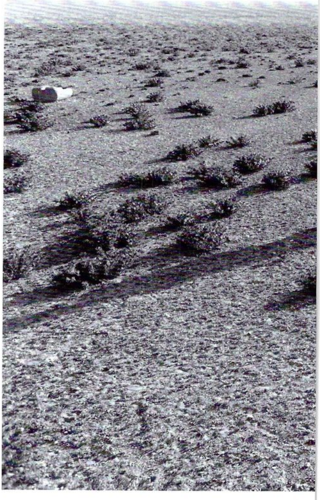
fortress on the shore of the Black Sea. Veysseyre was inspired to travel to Turkey by a 1968 photograph of the building by the late Fulvio Roiter (1926–2016)



Hay in an ox-cart between Refahiye and Zara
Sivas, August 1987
Travelling from Erzurum to Ankara at the end of the day, Veysseyre came across this timeless rural scene in deepest Anatolia. The ox-cart, known as a *kağnı*, is of an ancient design with solid wooden wheels





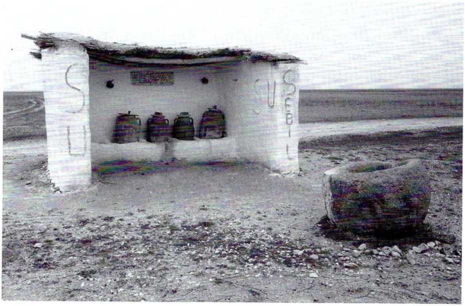


Top Sheepfolds on the Central Anatolian steppe near Obruk
Niğde, February 1986
In the background are the snow-covered volcanic peaks of Hasan Dağı and Melendiz Dağı

Above Drystone sheepfolds with roofs of dried branches at Bektaş, on a windswept plateau near Assos
Çanakkale, October 1991
Visible in the distance is the Aegean island of Lesbos (Midilli)

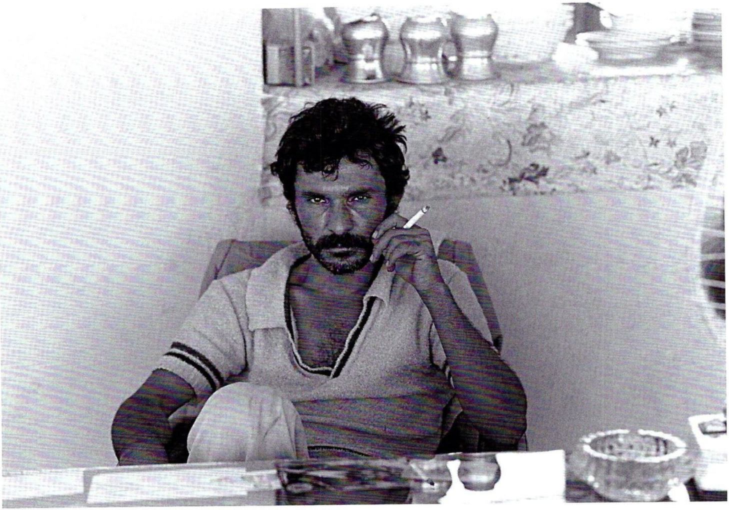
Above Two shepherds cast long shadows at the end of the day on the steppe near Ereğli
Konya, May 1982

Right A 'su sebil' (water fountain) near İsmil
Konya, May 1982
Water from a well is kept in earthenware jars with wooden lids for passers-by to drink. Building fountains is a traditional act of charity. This inscription reads: 'Hail travellers, hail travellers! Like your forebears, you were born, you will die. Follow the right path, the path of Mohammed'



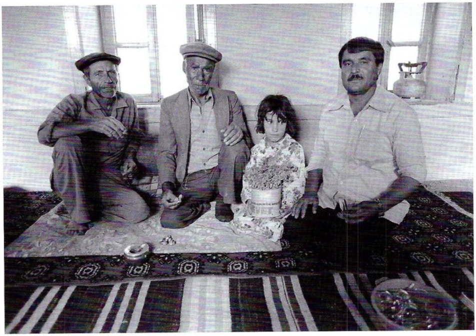
'In the distance a fragile figure is progressing slowly, coming ever closer… It's a little donkey patiently ambling along the track under the slight weight of an old bearded man. All alone in the night, he is singing under the moonlight. Almost upon us, he then continues on his way, paying no attention to this unusual encampment, drifting from view, long followed by his melody…'

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S WIFE, NICOLE BOUVIER-VEYSSEYRE, FROM HER CHAPTER, 'EVENING VISITORS'



'I was on my way to Iraq. That summer Turkey had been hit by a severe fuel shortage. The transfer of fuel was made using slightly rusty four-gallon Rotella oil cans. The 'boss', a rather disagreeable young man, was supervising the operations with the help of two affable henchmen. The haggling lasted for ages. Good Lyonnais that we were, and penniless, we balked at paying 20 times the pump price. I went to the boss's office for a final attempt at negotiation. He casually opened the drawer of his desk, where I noticed an automatic gun and a pump-action shotgun. He explained that he had already killed four or five people – "fascists"'

PAUL VEYSSEYRE ON HIS VISIT TO VİRANŞEHİR, AUGUST 1979



TOP A PUMP ATTENDANT, VİRANŞEHİR
URFA, AUGUST 1979
A left-wing militant, he boasted of having assassinated four or five 'fascist' opponents

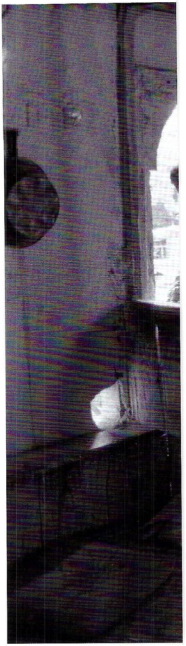
ABOVE A FAMILY RELAXING IN YOLAĞZI
GAZIANTEP, SEPTEMBER 1981

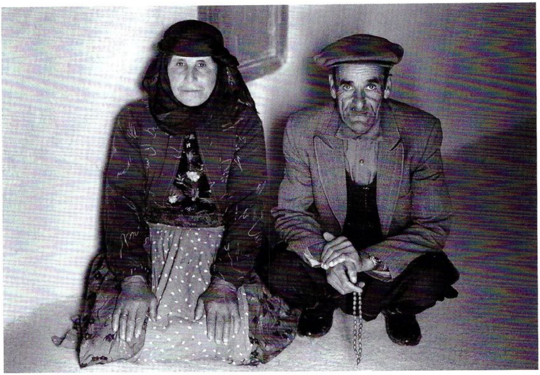
OPPOSITE A MINIBUS DRIVER WAITING FOR PASSENGERS IN VİRANŞEHİR
URFA, MAY 1979

Below A farming couple in their reception room, Yolağzi
Gaziantep, February 1986
This photograph, taken in a village with beautiful earth houses close to the Syrian border, is the cover image of Veysseyre's Anatolian volume

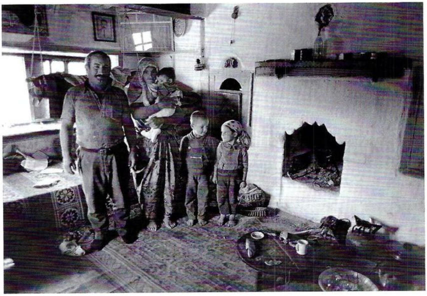
Bottom The family room of a farmhouse, Beyköy
Afyon, October 1981
This room, with its ornate raised fireplace, is used for cooking, eating and sleeping. A cradle (*beşik*) hangs from a beam by the window

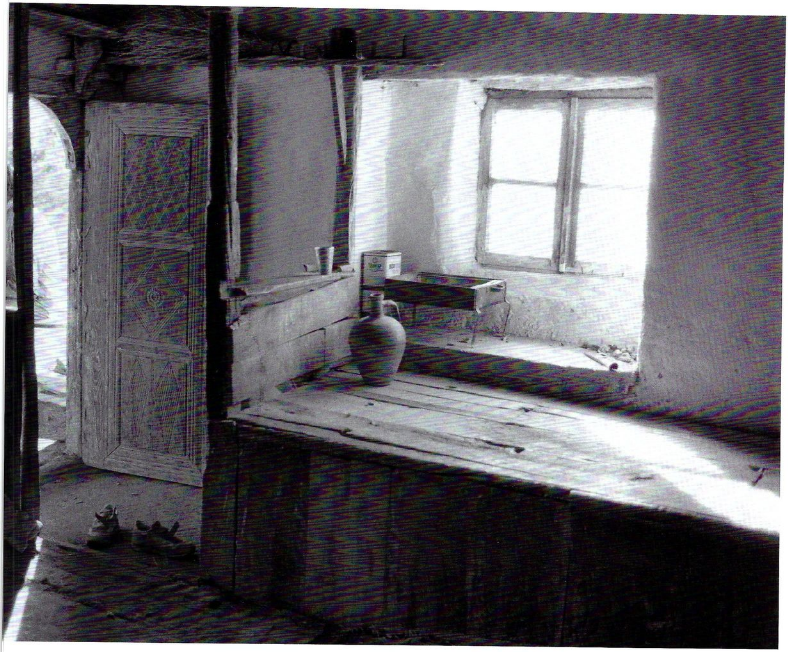
'The cover photograph of the old couple was in Paul's mind from the very first. They are his signature piece. "It summarises what I feel about Anatolian folk," he said, "their unassuming dignity, the mutual respect between individuals, the stillness and depth of their connection to the earth, to each other. Above all they are visually magnetic"'
Maggie Quigley Pinar, travel companion

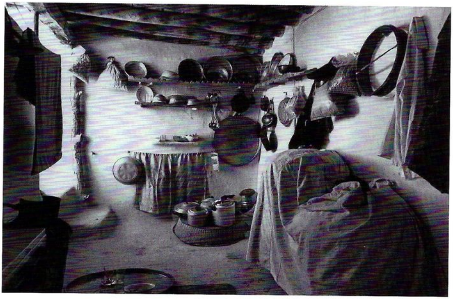




'Within a few minutes, I felt a profound well-being ('keyif'), which came from a refined simplicity and care for the real needs in life: the height of the ceiling, the angle of a window slightly shifted to obtain a bird's-eye view of the street below, the differing levels of flooring subtly ranking the space, the depth of a window ledge, the exact positioning of an opening to generate an agreeable draught in summer, an accessory placed very precisely where it was most needed. I intuitively felt the exceptional genius of the traditional Turkish house'
Veysseyre on his first Turkish house, at Veria, northern Greece, in 1969







Above Rustic interior, Çavdarhisar
Kütahya, April 1990
This quintessentially Turkish house has a carved doorway, a *sedir* for sleeping and sitting and high shelves for storing fruit and provisions

Right Kitchen in Balaban
Malatya, November 1977
A pressure cooker nestles among the traditional utensils in this beautiful mud house

RIGHT
HUTS AND EATING HOUSES ON THE AEGEAN SHORE, KÜÇÜKKUYU
ÇANAKKALE,
AUGUST 2004

FOLLOWING PAGES
EARTH PILLARS AT ŞAHİNEFENDİ, CAPPADOCIA
NEVŞEHİR,
NOVEMBER 1986

FALLING IN LOVE WITH 'LA TURQUIE PROFONDE'

Paul Veysseyre worked at the Gallo-Roman Museum of Saint-Romain-en-Gal near Lyon for some 28 years as *attaché de conservation du patrimoine*. His main task was to document mosaics and wall paintings in the museum's collection and their painstaking restoration, but he has also dedicated decades to taking black-and-white photographs of Turkey.

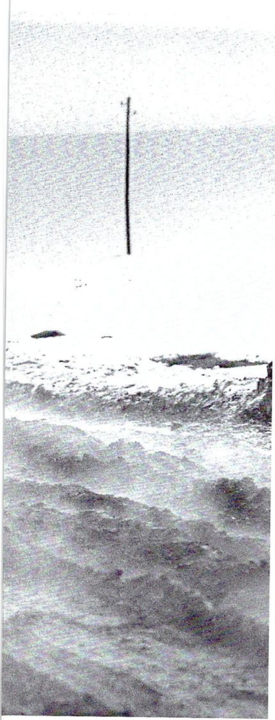
His first volume, *Istanbul, Gateway to Happiness*, focused on the old capital and cultural centre of the Turkish domains, and covered 20 years or so.

Paul perceives *Anatolia: Transient Lives* as the second book in a trilogy on his life's work, documenting the passage of time in Turkey and the region through the lives of inhabitants over a period of 40 years. He is currently working on a third volume, *Djahânnâma*, covering the Balkans, Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia, which is due out later this year.

For this volume, Veysseyre returned to Turkey time and again from his base in Lyon to capture the essence of the Anatolian countryside. "I sought to gain a depth of knowledge and experience of just a few countries rather than a superficial 'visitor's view' of many countries."

How to capture all those years spent in Turkey? The first and last photos were in his mind from the very first day. The portrait of the old couple from the book's cover (far right) is his signature piece. "It summarises what I feel about Anatolian folk: the unassuming dignity, the mutual respect between individuals, the stillness and depth of their connection to the earth, to each other."

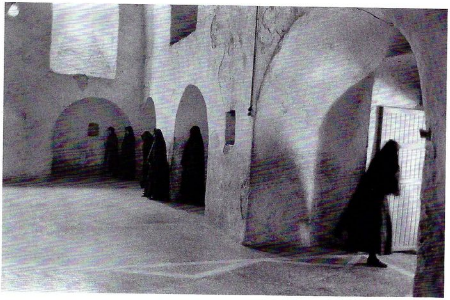
The last picture in the book is of snowy wastes on the road from Kayseri to Malatya (perhaps even bleaker than the photograph of the Kağnıkatan Pass above). The subject is a local villager who hitched a lift with Paul and travelled 40–50 kilometres back to his village. He asked to be put down in the middle of the drifting blizzard, then slowly walked away into an unfathomable nothingness towards a settlement who



Below Syriac nuns attend a service in the Mor Gabriel Monastery, near Midyat
Mardİn, August 1979
Founded in 397, the oldest Syriac Orthodox place of worship stands on the Tur Abdin plateau in southeastern Turkey

Above A charcoal burner at work in the village of Söğütlü, near Ayvacik
Çanakkale, October 1991

> *'We wander for a while in the deserted, snow-covered streets… Instead of a hotel, it is suggested that we go to a certain 'kıraathane' (a traditional men's café).*
> *It is crowded… men of all ages, elbow to elbow, in a warmly welcoming atmosphere, before a glass of strong and burning tea… and between them tacit complicity, a bastion against the strokes of fate, the extreme cold, the unemployment that eats away at lives, the weight of tradition and of family obligations. We cross this refuge of virility and go up to the first floor by an old staircase with loose floorboards'*
>
> Jeanine Riegel, travel companion, on her 1983 visit to Kars with Veysseyre



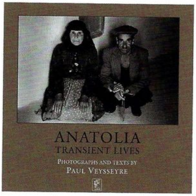
knows where. Only once, far away, did he deflect from his course to avoid some unseen obstacle. Paul watched him until he finally disappeared in a mist of snow.

That is the final statement of the book. Its 156 photos are a tiny sample of the thousands he shot in Anatolia. His archive totals more than 50,000 pictures in all, most of them taken in Turkey. "There is consistency among the pictures taken over 40 years," says Paul. Consistency in the subject matter, the flow of people, the type of telling image he always seeks.

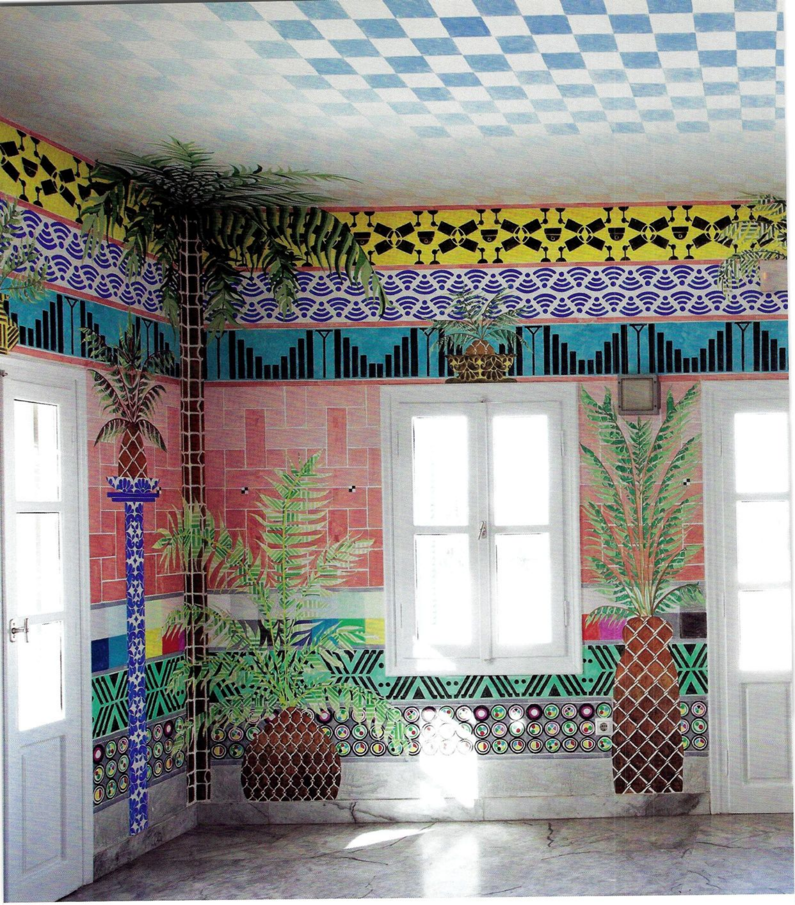
Maggie Quigley Pinar

Above left Lorries stranded in the snow on the Kağnikatan Pass
Ağri, February 1986
Eager to see the country as few visitors see it, Veysseyre drove alone across eastern Anatolia in winter, when snow covers the ground for six months of the year. The boy shrouded in a cloak on the pass called the Kağnıkatan (literally Ox-cart Killer) must have been no older than seven. The next day Veysseyre himself had to spend the night stranded in his car

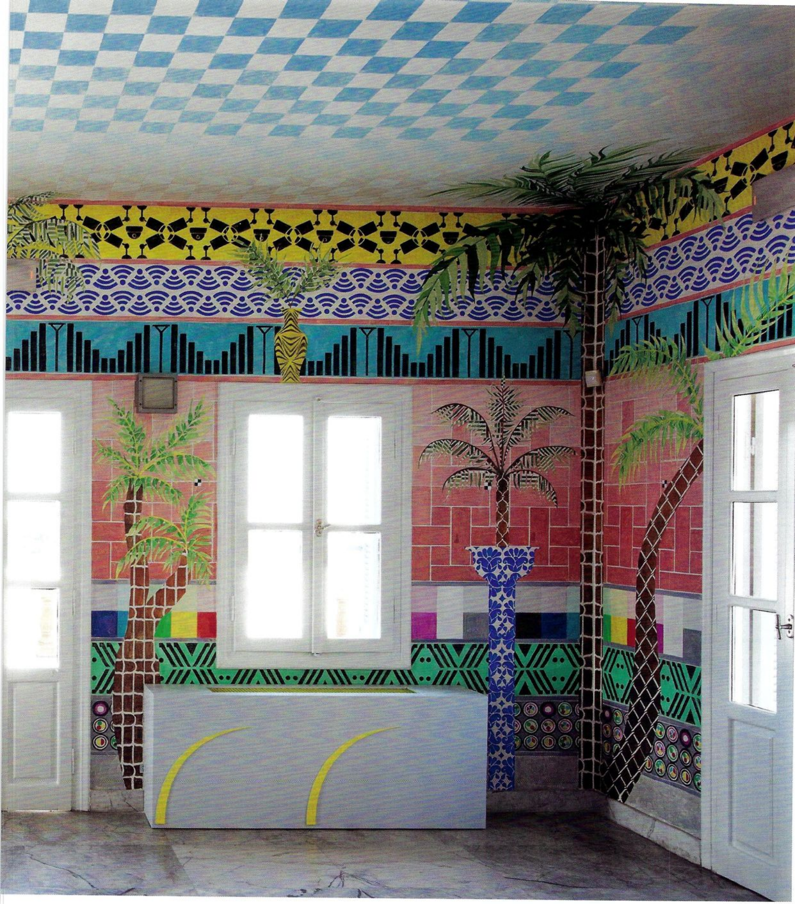
Veysseyre's volumes
The first two books in Paul Veysseyre trilogy, *Istanbul: Gateway to Happiness*, £40, and *Anatolia: Transient Lives*, £45, are published by Editions Djahânnâma, Lyon (djahannama-publishing.com), and available from cornucopia.net, post-free worldwide to subscribers. The third book follows in 2017



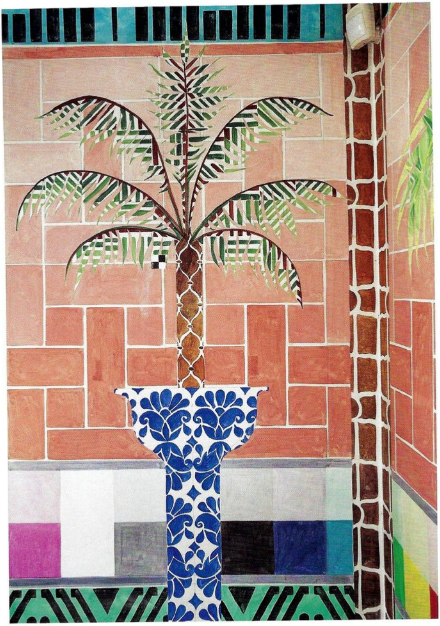
ANATOLIA
TRANSIENT LIVES
Photographs and texts by
Paul Veysseyre



OASIS OF PALM



The palm trees of Athens have been under siege from city planners and a deadly parasite, but an inventive artist has created a space in an abandoned museum attic where her stylised palms can flourish. By Thomas Roueché. Photographs by Yiannis Hadjislanis



Navine G Khan-Dossos (below) breathes new life into the top floor of the Benaki's Museum of Islamic Art with her mural, 'Imagine a Palm Tree'

NIKOS KOKKAS

Athens is a city rich in contradictions. Birthplace of western European culture, it was for centuries at the heart of the eastern Ottoman Empire, capital of a kingdom, then a republic, and in recent years emblematic of the profligate "South" of the EU. "Oh, it's very European!" says the visitor, with the same surprise we hear from tourists in Istanbul. And it is perhaps through its urban aesthetic that we first superficially understand a city such as this.

When the artist Navine G Khan-Dossos moved to Athens in late 2015, she began to hear the story of the city's once-endemic palm trees, which tells how, at some moment of historic upheaval – with the lifting of the "Ottoman yoke", or during Nazi occupation, or in the years of the Junta – a decision was taken to root out from public spaces the ultimate symbol of the East. The palm, so evocative of sun-drenched luxury, had no place in the western-facing kingdom or republic of Greece.

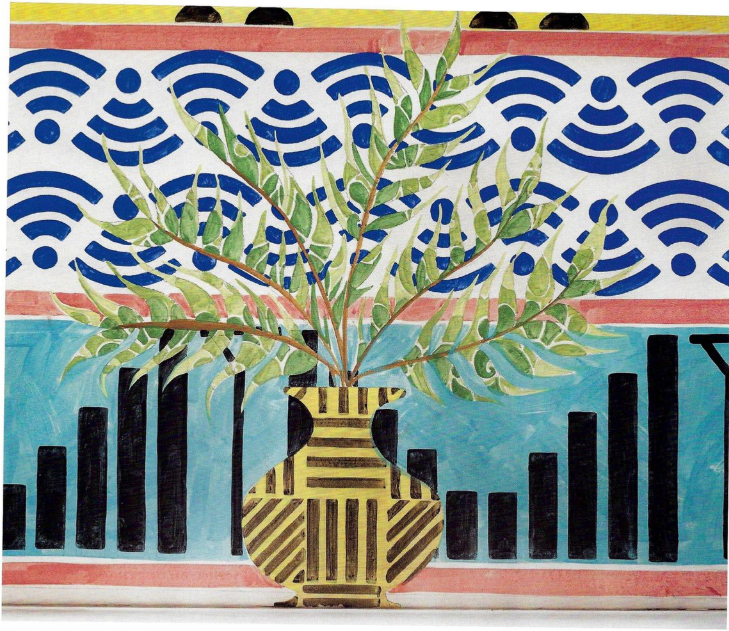
In the run-up to the 2004 Olympic Games, however, a shipment of palm trees arrived from the Persian Gulf, to provide lush shade to the Olympic developments. Like a Trojan horse, the imported palms brought with them the red palm weevil, a parasite that would destroy many of the few native palms that survived in private gardens.

When I first met Navine (whose names are an anagram of her birth names), she was artist in residence at Christ's College, Cambridge. Her dissertation had been on Khalil Şerif Pasha, Ottoman diplomat, art collector and roué, whose descendants include, apparently, the woman in the Egyptian tourist board's recent witty advertising campaign, which challenges the view of East and West as irreconcilable poles. In Paris in 1877, an official remarked to the Pasha that things must be very different back home. "Not at all," he replied. "We are quite as backward as you."

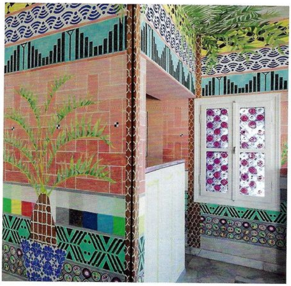
Over ten years Navine's work has moved from a study of Orientalism to an engagement with the potential of non-figurative Islamic art, in particular tiling in traditional religious art, and how Islamic aesthetics intersect with digital and post-internet art. She explores parallels between the repetitions of Islamic tiling and the pixelation of QR codes, drone cameras, algorithms and facial recognition software. Her most recent work includes the series *Remaining and Expanding* (2016), an exploration of Islamic State's online magazine, *Dabiq*.

Imagine a Palm Tree is her response to the myths surrounding the palms of Athens. At the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art, she has revived the top-floor café, forced to close by government budget cuts. A mural of stylised palms symbolises the vertical axis of the city: the leaves spread up into the realms of Wi-Fi, CCTV and telephones, the roots down towards the underground system and networks of cables and fibre optics. The symbols of technology are woven together with Islamic-style pattern and organic forms to create layers of aesthetic and conceptual detail. Fixing on the palm tree as a lodestar reveals the complexities and contradictions of the Mediterranean city, ever strung out between conflicting ideas of where, precisely, on what civilisational longitude, it lies. ◆

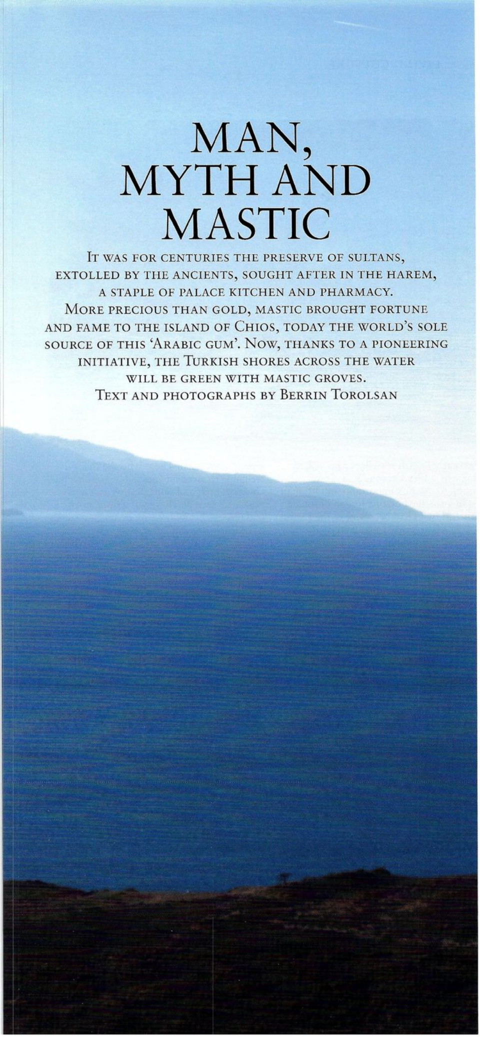
Thomas Roueché is a Cornucopia contributor and editor of 'Tank' magazine, tom.roueche@gmail.com



With its references to traditional Islamic tiling and the icons of old and new technology, the mural is the culmination of the artist's research into the cultural and political symbolism of the palm tree in Greek culture and Oriental art



Looking across the Aegean to the Çeşme Peninsula and the mountains of Chios beyond. Chios is known in Turkish as Sakız Adası, or Mastic Island
Opposite: Tears of mastic form on an old tree in Alaçatı, on the mainland. The precious gum has a cedar-like fragrance



MAN, MYTH AND MASTIC

IT WAS FOR CENTURIES THE PRESERVE OF SULTANS, EXTOLLED BY THE ANCIENTS, SOUGHT AFTER IN THE HAREM, A STAPLE OF PALACE KITCHEN AND PHARMACY. MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD, MASTIC BROUGHT FORTUNE AND FAME TO THE ISLAND OF CHIOS, TODAY THE WORLD'S SOLE SOURCE OF THIS 'ARABIC GUM'. NOW, THANKS TO A PIONEERING INITIATIVE, THE TURKISH SHORES ACROSS THE WATER WILL BE GREEN WITH MASTIC GROVES.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY BERRIN TOROLSAN

Last autumn, drawn by the aromatic scent of mastic, we headed for Çeşme, a popular resort town sitting at the tip of a peninsula of the same name, jutting out into the Aegean south of Izmir. The Çeşme Peninsula is a part of the wider Karaburun Peninsula, where winding lanes lead up onto barren hilltops with fabulous views across the strait to the Greek island of Chios. It is a beautiful but austere wedge of land with long, slanting ridges, which seems nothing more than a paradise for wind-farmers and windsurfers.

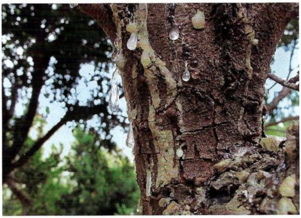
Yet concealed in shallow valleys are veritable gardens of Eden. In the centre, a trail of handmade signs leads to a maze of vineyards and some of Turkey's best wine producers. And there is another local resource whose potential value is just as great. The climate and terrain are also ideal for the cultivation of gum mastic trees, and our purpose was to investigate new mastic plantations.

TEMA (the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion), the leading national champion of natural habitats, has been pioneering a project to protect Çeşme's existing native mastic trees and to plant new saplings. Chios, just across the water from Çeşme, produces almost all the world's mastic. The Çeşme Peninsula has identical ecological conditions, but alas few of its mastic trees survive.

The gum mastic tree, *Pistacia lentiscus*, is a shrubby evergreen with deep-green foliage. Though it belongs to the pistachio genus, it is not grown for nuts, but for the aromatic resin known to the West as mastic gum, to Turks as *sakız*, to romantics as "tears of Chios". Many wild forms exist across the Mediterranean, but only on Chios is mastic exploited. Indeed, such is Chios's monopoly that to Turks it is Sakız Adası (Mastic Island).

Mastic is used in toothpaste, soap and cosmetics, in some chewing gums and other confectionery, and in the varnish of musical instruments. It can be an ingredient of *lokum* (Turkish delight) and rakı (*sakız rakısı*).

The resin is harvested in summer. Small cuts are scored into the bark to make the tree weep. The fluid hardens as it is exposed to air, and the

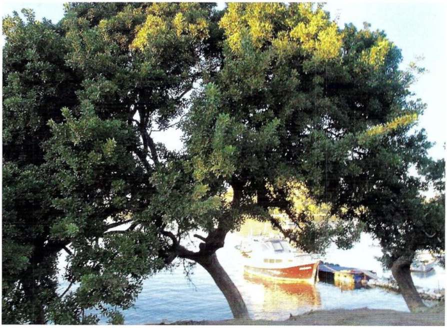


translucent droplets are collected by hand, as they have been since prehistoric times. The physicians of antiquity were familiar with mastic's health-giving powers. In ancient Greece, in Rome and the later Arab world, it was valued for its digestive properties. Its essential oil, masticin, has long been used in ointments and balms, while modern science endorses its antiseptic, antibacterial and cramp-relieving effects. The first sticking plasters used mastic as a disinfectant. In recent years its age-old reputation as a remedy for intestinal troubles has been vindicated with the discovery that it cures peptic ulcers, even those resistant to strong modern drugs.

In the Middle Ages, as culinary fashions followed the Arab conquests, mastic became a regular ingredient at high tables, like cinnamon, sugar or pepper, prized as much for its salutary benefits as for its flavour, securing Chios's place in the spice trade.

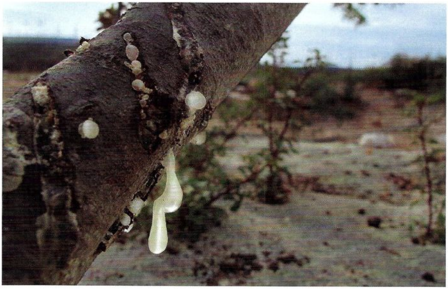
Over centuries Chios and its sought-after commodity were captured and recaptured. As the Byzantine Empire declined, it became a colony of Genoa, supplying the 14th-century courts of Europe. In 1566, after nearly two centuries, the Ottomans seized the island and it became a province. Mastic-producing villages (*mastika köyü*) in the south, where the soil is deepest, belonged, like the crop itself, to the Sultan's mother, the Valide Sultan, who became the islanders' benefactor and built their mosques, fountains and libraries.

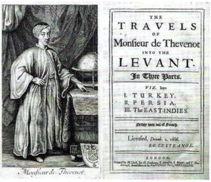
The best mastic was sent to Istanbul. To ensure a constant supply, the Ottoman government protected the farmers, appointing a special governor, the Sakız Emini, and granting them tax exemption and other privileges. These they would retain until 1841, when Sultan Abdülmecid's reforms swept away the imperial mastic monopoly along with the tax breaks.



Two early French travellers who visited Chios, which they knew as Scio, drew attention to mastic's importance in Ottoman days. In 1701 the botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, who had been sent to the Levant by Louis XIV, reported that land on the island could be bought and sold only on condition that the trees, the Sultan's property, were preserved. Inhabitants of the 21 villages producing mastic were allowed the privilege of building bell towers for their churches and wearing white turbans, like the Turks. Tournefort noted that 286 crates of mastic, weighing 100,025 *okka* (around 128 tons), went to Constantinople and Izmir that year. Farmers could sell the rest, but the trade was strictly controlled. Those who did the weighing received a handful as a gratuity, but cheating, theft and smuggling were severely punished. Jean de Thévenot, writing in 1657, had observed: "Whosoever are taken stealing of Mastick, are without remission sent to the galleys." He describes the trees as "crooked like vines, creeping along the ground", but the "white gumm" as "of a very good scent".

Most of the island's mastic was used to flavour breads, stews, confectionery, cakes and biscuits. Pharmacists had their share, for balms, creams, pills, soaps, syrups and potions, as well as cosmetics for the harem, where the ladies chewed mastic (related to the word "masticate") to freshen the breath




Monsieur de Thevenot.

THE
TRAVELS
OF
Monſieur de Thevenot
INTO THE
LEVANT.
In Three Parts.
VIZ. Into
I. TURKEY.
II. PERSIA.
III. The EAST-INDIES.

Newly done out of French.

Licenſed, Decemb. 2. 1686.
RO. LESTRANGE.

LONDON,

ABOVE JEAN DE THÉVENOT (1633–67) WAS IMPRESSED BY THE CHIOS MASTIC HARVEST
TOP GUM MASTIC TREES AT ILDIR, ANCIENT ERYTHRAE, ACROSS THE WATER FROM CHIOS
LEFT RESIN OOZING FROM SCORED BARK IN A NEW GUM-MASTIC GROVE NEAR ÇEŞME
OPPOSITE TRANSLUSCENT NUGGETS OF MASTIC: CHEWING TURNS THE BRITTLE RESIN PURE WHITE

and keep teeth clean and white – benefits confirmed by modern dentistry. The Topkapı still has its precious lidded mastic containers (*sakızlık*). Byron, who visited the palace, used the gum in his manic efforts to lose weight. The palace was also, as it happens, obsessed with Swiss watches, little knowing that Swiss watchmakers depended on mastic to secure their precious enamel decoration.

The gum's commercial potential is still immense, and Chios handles the lucrative mastic business with the sophistication of the diamond trade. But in 2012 fire took a terrible toll on the island's mastic groves, and now it can barely keep up with demand. This points up the risks of relying on one small island to supply the world's needs, and the importance of establishing an alternative source – perhaps just across the water on the Turkish mainland.

The history of Çeşme's mastic has been one of lost opportunities. Before the Ottoman conquest of Chios, it had been the palace's main source of the gum. The peninsula continued to produce it until the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations in 1923. But the new settlers were tobacco growers from northern Greece with no idea of the potential of the mastic groves they had inherited.

It wasn't until 1967 that the great botanist and pharmacist Professor Turhan Baytop visited Çeşme and pioneered the notion of planting new groves there. Even then precious little happened for three decades, until Ahmet Priştina, Izmir's popular mayor, created a nursery of 800 trees; but with his early death the project foundered.

The mastic tree requires little maintenance. All you need do is prune any dead branches and clear the ground of weeds. Then, from June, you make cuts in the bark twice a week, and collect resin from July to October. For this, a single tree could earn a farmer a happy TL700 (about £180). And branches laid in trenches, in the same way as roses are grown for attar of roses, will take root naturally.

The problem is that the weeping variety of *Pistacia lentiscus* – the evergreen gum mastic tree – is hard to identify without DNA testing, being indistinguishable to the eye from other varieties. As it takes seven years for a young tree to start weeping nicely, you could waste years barking up the wrong tree.

TEMA's Hikmet Öztürk and Mahir Keskin set about numbering and preserving every ancient gum mastic tree on the Çeşme Peninsula. They then created a "clone park" of grafted trees. This was no easy matter, as the weeping prevents the graft from taking, but a suitable non-weeping parent was found near Gaziantep, in the far east of the country. Around 1,000 established trees from this source will be donated to the Ministry of Forestry this year.

The task requires teamwork, dedication and love, and there are several heroes in this endeavour. One is the mastic aficionado Coşkun Vural, a former importer, who now produces around 15kg a year, all of it snapped up by a mystery buyer in Ankara. His neighbour Metin Gemici has a charming line in bonsai mastic, complete with stone houses and miniature gardens.

Not only is mastic potentially lucrative; it is also an attractive shrub, long-lived and tolerant of poor saline soils and drought – ideal for seaside gardens. Everyone in the area could be planting it.

With the backing of Kent Gıda, producers of the Turkish mastic-flavoured Falım chewing gum, and their owners, Mondelez International, TEMA has sown the seeds of mastic's great revival in Çeşme. May this aromatic project see these hills – beside the bluest waters, beneath the bluest skies – covered with mastic groves in the century to come. ◆

For more on mastic, cornucopia.net/mastic

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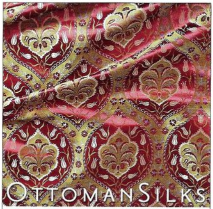

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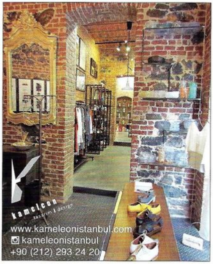

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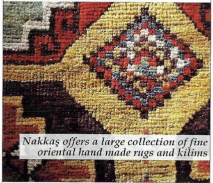

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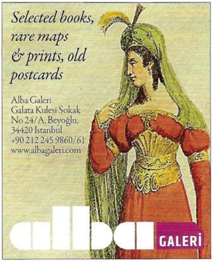

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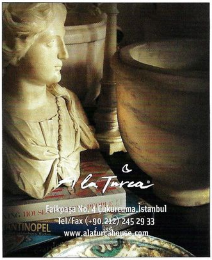

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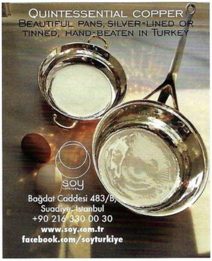

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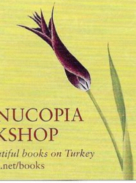

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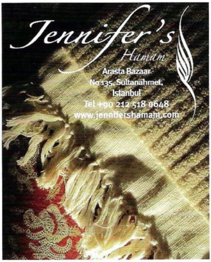

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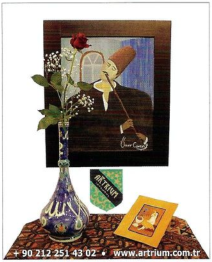

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And the award for most versatile, most nourishing and best-loved ingredient goes to... the humble chickpea. Berrin Torolsan explores its history and its limitless talent to entertain us in a multitude of different roles

Winter warmer: Chicken and chickpeas with very spicy chilli

My first encounter with chickpeas was observing them sprout in moist cotton wool for a primary-school homework project. Seeing a bone-dry seed transform into a tiny plant with a life force all of its own was fascinating. We experimented with lentils and beans as well, but my favourite was the chickpea. I don't know why – perhaps it was that tiny nose, known scientifically as a *rostellum*, that appealed to me. The seed resembles a ram's head, hence the Latin name *Cicer arietinum*, meaning "ram-like chickpea". Turkey has a sought-after variety with especially large, tasty seeds known, too, as ram's head (*koçbaşı*).

Agriculturally, chickpeas demand very little effort, growing in almost every part of the country. Chalky or salty soil, a humid or dry climate – the chickpea isn't fussy. And its ability, like other legumes, to increase the fertility of the soil by fixing large amounts of nitrogen also endears it to farmers, who commonly grow it in orchards or fields in rotation with other crops.

Chickpeas are completely at home in Turkey, one of the world's largest producers. Planted in April and May, they produce little white or purple flowers, which turn into small pods that ripen for three months, then split open to expose one, two or three small, pea-like seeds.

In 1925 a Russian botanist, Professor Petr Zhukovsky, came to Turkey to collect specimens and seeds for a gene bank in Russia, the brainchild of the Soviet botanist and geneticist Nicolai Ivananovic Vavilov (1887–1943). Back in Leningrad, Zhukovsky published the results of his scientific observations in a groundbreaking book, *Agricultural Anatolia*, in 1933. He argued that many European cultivars, both cereals and legumes, originated in the gene pool of Anatolia. High on his list was the chickpea.

The recent recovery by Japanese archaeobotanists of chickpea seeds at Tell el Kerk, in northwest Syria, not far from the Turkish border, endorses his theory. Their chickpea hoard – 11 intact seeds, 65 half-seeds and 62 fragments – dates back to the late 10th millennium BC. Cultivation of wild species had begun by the beginning of the Neolithic period over a wide area of western Asia. The chickpea seems to have been domesticated there first before possibly being taken to post-glacial Europe, along with other ancient crops such as fava beans, peas and lentils. Protein-dense pulses were essential to the diet of prehistoric communities, as they are in many parts of the world today. The chickpea also provides valuable minerals such as magnesium, calcium, iron, zinc, phosphorus and selenium, and key vitamins, including B6 and E.

CRUNCHY SAKIZ LEBLEBİSİ ('WHITE' CHICKPEAS), A SIMPLE, TASTY MEZE TO NIBBLE WITH RAKI

The chickpea has been part of life for thousands of years in Anatolia – nourishing not only populations but their culture and folklore. It even inspired a lovely sand colour, *nohudî*, which used to be fashionable among the Ottoman elite and whose name derives from *nohut*, the Turkish word for chickpea.

For rich or poor, no celebratory meal was complete without its chickpea pilav – it was a centrepiece at village wedding and urban banquet alike. In 1539 the circumcision of Süleyman the Magnificent's crown princes Beyazıt and Cihangir prompted two weeks of celebrations all over Istanbul; they included, of course, a pilav with chickpeas, but this one called for 40 *kile* – about a ton – of chickpeas. The amount of rice required makes the mind boggle.

Yet the chickpea was by no means just for feast days. Reinhold Lubenau, who came to Constantinople in 1587 as a pharmacist to the Habsburg envoy, remarked on the food markets near the Bedestan: stalls of pulses were piled high with chickpeas, beans and lentils. The same abundance was seen at the Topkapı, which had many mouths to feed both in the palace and in the city. Imperial kitchen accounts for the end of the 16th century record the purchase of 20–25,000 *kıyye* (25–31 tons) of chickpeas, with special mention made of those from Egypt and from Keşan in Thrace.

Today, distinctive, brightly lit food carts offering steaming chickpea pilav are a familiar sight on Istanbul streets, particularly at night. Taxi drivers flock to them. At home, the chickpea is an indispensable winter staple, endlessly versatile: it turns into soups, stews and a filling for dumplings, such as *nohutlu mantı*, a speciality of Bursa (see CORNUCOPIA 51). Ground into meal, it is made into tasty snacks such as the Arab falafel and *humus* and the Armenian savoury *topik*. It even goes into desserts such as *aşure* (frumenty). But nothing can beat a bowl of hot, satisfying chickpea stew.

Chickpeas ferment quickly, which makes them a useful agent for pickles and effervescent drinks such as *tükenmez*, an old form of cider. A special chickpea yeast, *nohut mayası*, simply obtained by keeping chickpeas in a jar of water in a warm place, is used to make bread. It imparts a mouthwatering aroma to baked foods such as the crunchy aniseed biscuits known as *anasonlu galeta,* which will keep for ever. Miraculously, even yoghurt can be started with the same simple chickpea yeast.

Last but not least is *leblebi*, the roasted chickpeas eaten everywhere as a snack. They were consumed in large quantities in Ottoman Istanbul. According to the 17th-century traveller Evliya Çelebi, some 400 people were employed in the city's 100 *leblebi* shops. *Kebab leblebi* – yellow chickpeas, roasted several times, hulled, and freckled by one last roasting – is a particular speciality of Çorum in central Anatolia. In winter, those who order the fermented millet drink *boza* at Istanbul's famous Vefa Bozası bar will often buy warm roasted chickpeas at a shop opposite to add to their glasses. These are also milled into a sugary powder known as *kavut*, which is sold to children in paper cones. Another popular *leblebi* is the white and crunchy kind known as *sakız* ("mastic-white") *leblebi*. It makes a fine meze with rakı.

In 1908, Eliza Putnam Heaton, editor of the women's page of the *New York Recorder*, encountered "vendors of roasted '*ciceri*', the chick-peas of Cicero's family name" at the fair of Sant'Alfio in Sicily. She describes how one of the women was roasting them: "On a circle of lava stones rested a deep iron pan over a fire of vine cuttings. In the pan was sand, which she stirred with a wooden shovel until it came to the right heat; then she turned in her peas, stirred briskly till they began to pop, and then with bundles of rags lifted the pan – it was patched, for I counted, with nine pieces of iron nailed on – and turned the sand through a sieve into another big pan, delivering the hot peas to her husband, who acted as salesman."

This way of making *leblebi* is possibly a legacy of the Arab agriculture and cuisine of medieval Sicily and exactly how Anatolian village women roast their saltwater-soaked chickpeas today – in hot sand on hot iron griddles – when they offer white *leblebi* snacks to guests on the eve of a wedding. Who knows how far this practice goes back?

A lasting childhood memory is of the pink sugar-covered *leblebi* still used to decorate nut-shop windows. For children chickpeas are not only a popular snack but the stuff of riddles:

Yük dibinde Yusuf durur,
Burnunu kısıp, oturur.

Yusuf sits all alone at the bottom of the larder, turning up his nose. Who is this sulking Yusuf? Why, a chickpea, of course.

NOTES ON COOKING CHICKPEAS

Dried chickpeas must be soaked overnight, in plenty of water. Drain, add fresh water and simmer for about an hour to 90 minutes, depending on the chickpeas' age. Better still, use a pressure cooker, which preserves the nutrients and antioxidants and cuts cooking time to around 20 minutes. For speed keep a stock of previously cooked chickpeas in the freezer. Quickest option of all, although they do contain additives, is to use tinned.

NOHUT ÇORBASI
CHICKPEA SOUP

Handful of chickpeas (soaked overnight)

1 medium carrot, chopped

1 onion, quartered

1–2 garlic cloves, peeled

Salt and paprika flakes

1 glass of chicken or veal stock, or hot water

Butter

The Ottoman gentleman cook Mehmet Kâmil gives chickpea soup as the first recipe in his 1844 book *Melceü't-tabbâhin* (*The Refuge of Cooks*), but his version is plain and contains no added vegetables. I prefer this tasty recipe from Rumelia (the Ottoman Balkans), adapted from the book *Yemek Kitabı* (*Cook Book*), published in Turkish in Bulgaria in 1965. It can also be made with dried broad beans or peas (see CORNUCOPIA 53).

1 Drain the chickpeas and place in a pan, adding the carrot, onion, garlic and enough water to cover. Add salt and a pinch of paprika flakes, and bring to the boil. Simmer until the contents are mushy.

2 Press through a sieve into another large pan, or whizz in a blender or food processor. Dilute the purée with the stock or hot water and add just enough extra water to make a thick soup. Bring back to the boil and season to taste.

3 Add a spoonful of butter and serve piping hot, preferably with crunchy croutons.

NOHUTLU İŞKEMBE YAHNİSİ
TRIPE STEW WITH CHICKPEAS

1/2 kg beef tripe, cleaned

250g chickpeas (soaked overnight)

1 large onion, peeled and chopped

3–4 cloves garlic, peeled

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon wheat flour

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1 dessertspoon paprika flakes (hot)

Salt

Half a lemon

Shops in Istanbul known as *ciğerci* specialise in all kinds of offal, including cleaned tripe ready to cook. I recommend using a pressure cooker, but this stew can also be easily prepared with ready-cooked tripe and previously cooked or tinned chickpeas – sauté the onion and garlic lightly in olive oil, and cook all the ingredients for 15–20 minutes.

1 Rinse the tripe in plenty of cold water. Chop on a board into roughly 2cm squares and transfer to a pressure cooker.

2 Rinse the chickpeas and add to the tripe.

3 Chop the onion and garlic cloves.

4 Heat the olive oil in a shallow pan, sauté the onion and garlic until soft, stir in a spoonful of flour and fry for a little longer.

5 Stir in the tomato paste and half a glass of cold water and allow to cook and thicken. Dilute with two more glasses of water, mix well and pour into the pressure cooker with the tripe and chickpeas.

6 Season with salt and paprika, then add the lemon juice, including the squeezed-out rind, and more water to cover. Cook for about 45 minutes, until the tripe is tender and the juices have thickened.

7 Remove the lemon rind and serve hot, straight from the pan, perhaps with a little extra paprika, depending on how hot you like your stew. Pickled vegetables that sharpen the appetite go well with this dish.

HUMUS

150g chickpeas (soaked overnight)

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 cloves garlic, peeled

2 heaped tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)

1/2 glass olive oil

Juice of 2 lemons

1/2 teaspoon powdered cumin

1 teaspoon paprika flakes to garnish

Fresh flat-leaved parsley to garnish

The word *humus* comes from the Arabic for chickpea, and indeed the dish (hummus or houmous in English) originated in the Middle East. Ingredients vary depending on the region. If you don't have tahini to hand, this lemony spread is still delicious without. An excellent meze or first course, *humus* goes well with toast or pitta bread. According to Orhan Gündüz, whose eye for colour is invaluable to the look of CORNUCOPIA, it is eaten in his native Antakya for breakfast, as a relish at lunch, and as a meze at dinner, served with watercress and thinly sliced radishes.

1 Drain the soaked chickpeas, cook in plenty of water until soft and leave to cool.

2 Pound the garlic to a pulp in a deep bowl or mortar with salt.

3 Skin the chickpeas by rubbing them between your palms or fingers – easily done.

4 Transfer the chickpeas with the garlic pulp, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice and cumin to a blender or food processor and whizz to form a smooth paste.

5 When serving, drizzle with extra olive oil and decorate with the paprika flakes and finely chopped parsley.

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NOHUT YAHNİSİ CHICKPEA AND MUTTON STEW

½ kg mutton, cubed
2–3 tablespoons olive oil or butter
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 teaspoon tomato paste
250g chickpeas (soaked overnight)
1 medium onion, chopped
Salt and pepper
4 slices of bread (preferably stale)
1 clove garlic (optional)
Natural yoghurt (optional)

The Sufi dervish Ali Eşref Dede gives this recipe in his slim 1858 *Yemek Risalesi* (*Treatise on Cooking*). For the best results, the mutton should not be lean. The ingredients can all be cooked together in a pressure cooker in just 20 minutes, as against an hour or two in a conventional pan.

1 Heat the oil or butter in a heavy pan, and stir-fry the meat until it is brown on all sides and the juices are absorbed. Add the lemon juice and the tomato paste with about two glasses of water. Now add the chickpeas and onion to the pan, cover with hot water and cook over a medium heat, until the meat is tender and the chickpeas are soft to the bite, checking often and adding more hot water if needed.

2 When cooked, season with salt and pepper, stir and allow to simmer for another 5–10 minutes, until the sauce thickens a little more. Adjust seasoning.

3 Toast the bread, cut into small squares and divide between soup plates. Ladle the stew generously over the bread.

4 A dollop of garlic yoghurt is perfect on top of the stew but optional. In a bowl, pound the garlic to a pulp with a pinch of salt. Spoon in the yoghurt and mix. Serve separately for people to help themselves.

TAVUKLU NOHUT CHICKEN WITH CHICKPEAS

1 small chicken, quartered
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 large onions, chopped
250g chickpeas (soaked overnight)
1 tablespoon tomato paste
Salt
1 or 2 small dried chillies (optional)

Writing in 1882 in her book *The Housewife*, Ayşe Fahriye Hanım notes under "Chickpea Stews" that this dish, an Istanbul winter classic, can be prepared with mutton, turkey or goose. She serves it over toasted bread.

1 Rinse and pat the chicken dry.

2 Heat the olive oil and sauté the onions in a shallow pan until they start to caramelise. Remove the onions and set aside.

3 Add a little extra oil to the pan if needed and stir-fry the chicken until golden all over.

4 Place the chickpeas, onion and chicken in a saucepan. Season with salt and add the chillies whole if using them. Dilute the tomato paste in a glass of water and pour over the contents of the pan. Add more water to cover.

5 Bring to the boil and simmer gently until the chickpeas are soft to the bite and the chicken is cooked (in a pressure cooker allow about 20 minutes).

6 Serve piping hot with a good rustic bread to mop up the tasty sauce.

NOHUTLU PİLAV CHICKPEA PILAV

1 glass chickpeas, previously cooked
2 glasses rice (short-grain)
2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
4 glasses hot water or chicken stock
Salt

In the 15th-century, Mehmed the Conqueror's famous grand vizier, Mahmud Pasha, invited his ministers to weekly gatherings at which he scattered solid gold chickpeas moulded by his goldsmiths over the platter of rice and chickpea pilav (see CORNUCOPIA 7). For those of less extravagant taste, this simple pilav is healthy and delectable, and makes a perfectly balanced meal with a seasonal salad of crisp lettuce, grated carrots and radishes.

1 Soak the rice in hot water for about half an hour and drain.

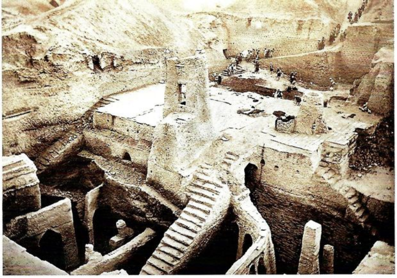
2 Stir-fry the rice in the olive oil or butter, tossing the grains, then add the drained chickpeas; continue frying and stirring for a couple of minutes.

3 Add 4 glasses of hot water, or chicken stock if you prefer. Season with salt.

4 Stir and bring to the boil. Simmer gently on a very low heat, covered and undisturbed, for 15–20 minutes or until all the juices are absorbed and the rice grains have puffed up.

5 Remove from the heat and leave to rest, covered, for another 15–20 minutes. If you like, dot the surface with extra butter for added richness. Mix and serve hot. ◆

Berrin Torolsan, bt@cornucopia.net.
For cookery articles from past issues, see cornucopia.net/cookery



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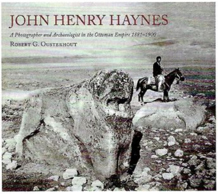
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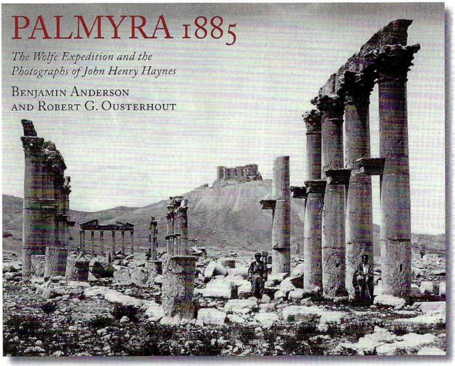
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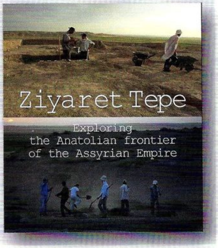
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Village Voices

Despite the drama of July 15's coup, the rhythm of Azize Ethem's life in Iznik has barely lost a beat. While the reintroduction of partridges and woodcock to the hills is welcome, less so is the new Yenişehir-to-Ankara highway cutting a swathe through the town. Meanwhile, in the garden the last bean crop has ripened

Although the weather was uncomfortably hot on July 15 I unwisely spent most of the day working in the garden. In the evening, exhausted, flopped in front of the TV, I was mustering the energy to make my way to bed when a phone call alerted me to a coup... here in Turkey. A coup? Impossible. But no, it was indeed happening. For hours I flicked through the news channels trying to understand it all.

Sometime after midnight I received a text from the President urging me to go out into the streets with a flag. Being technically dyslexic it took me a while to realise that someone, somewhere, can tweak a few buttons and send out millions of messages. I only have a Saudi flag, which we used on our yacht in the Red Sea, and waving that in the lane between the olive groves in the early hours of the morning wouldn't have been much help to the Turkish nation.

Next morning, when I eventually crawled out of bed, my world looked the same. I am not sure what I was expecting but the serenity of the lake, the garden and the trees seemed surreal with the country in a state of chaos. Messages started to come in from friends. I channel-hopped and read articles online. Conspiracy theories were surfacing left, right and centre. The coup was over with and it was now time for retribution.

Within a few days the humdrum chores of daily life started to intrude. The outlet pipe on the outside kitchen sink sprouted holes. The water filter from the artesian well needed cleaning. A branch fell on my electricity cables, attached to the pylon I share with four neighbours further along the shore. The electricity outage meant a call to Tamer, the Orhangazi electrician. This man is truly an angel. He is aghast that I choose to live in what he deems a godforsaken place. Grandmothers should live with their children, knit booties and drink endless glasses of tea. That I have no woman to clean the house and make börek for me really disturbs him. He finds my changing outlet pipes and cleaning the lake shore unfathomable. This works to my advantage, as the thought of me coping without electricity has him putting all other jobs on hold and racing 14km to my rescue.

Five days later it was Wednesday, time for my routine trip to the Iznik market. Expecting roadblocks and checks, I made sure I had all my car papers and ID card with me. Everything was normal, no gendarme or police vehicles, just the usual city cars whizzing by and the occasional tractor. The only discernible changes were the closure of the religious school and the lack of police sitting in the teahouses gossiping with their mates. Where politics and the weather are usually the dominant topics of conversation, nobody was talking about our government or the coup. Weeks later I still see no sign of the police, which could be because they prefer their air-conditioned offices to the heat outside. Maybe they have a surfeit of paperwork or perhaps they have been sacked... Just a small mystery among a host of larger ones.

Iznik is becoming well known internationally for its sporting events, with a yearly ultra-marathon, triathlon and a 1,000-metre rowing race. In early September there was a cycling tour from Iznik to Çanakkale and the Junior World Wrestling Championships were won by a young Iznik man.

Two years ago the laws changed and the status of Iznik altered, with the Bursa authorities having more power in the development of this city. To start with, the only thing I noticed was new signage everywhere, with the word Bursa in a much larger script than the name of our town. Now changes are in full swing – most of them approved of by the locals. Town officials are working to submit an application for inclusion of the district onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The National Parks Department, with the Turkish Hunters Association, is reintroducing wildlife to areas where over-hunting has decimated the population of game birds. Six kilometres into the hills beyond Iznik an initial release of 3,000 partridges has been completed, with hunting banned for three years. More partridge, along with woodcock, will be released in the coming months.

Work has started on repairing the city walls, with plans for a pedestrian walkway and cycle path. As the walls are second in length only to Istanbul's fortifications, I can't see the restoration being finished for years.

Very positive news is the announcement that a wealthy businessman and his wife are building a large old-people's home on the edge of town, which they intend to donate to the Iznik authorities. Less welcome is the plan to concrete over the lake shore and provide tables, seating and barbecues.

Archaeologists and their teams have been hard at work on the pottery-kiln site. A new team is working on what it claims is the newly discovered church in the shallow waters near the lake shore, and several really impressive sarcophagi have been found in fields near the town.

It seems as if every time Selim and I found a nice quiet spot to live, progress came galloping in to change it. I am always whingeing about roadworks but one massive project in full swing at the moment makes past inconveniences look paltry. Work on a new highway from Orhangazi through Iznik to Yenişehir and on to Ankara is under way. A strip of land over 30km long is to be denuded of its fruit and olive trees, and the nice winding road I drive to Iznik will become a high-speed four-lane thoroughfare.

Yesterday Mehmet Bean told me that an Istanbul businessman is negotiating to buy the field behind me to build wooden holiday homes. I have already seen two new speed boats on the lake, and a jet ski zooming past.

In late August I went up to Istanbul to meet and party with friends who had arrived from Bali for a few days in the city before travelling south for a Blue Cruise around the coast. A dozen of us stayed in the Adahan, my favourite hotel in Beyoğlu. With no trendy decor and staff with smiles reaching their eyes, it is a place where I feel at home. Each room sports a well-thumbed copy of CORNUCOPIA, which makes it all the more special to me.

Our host, Çetin, had organised a flawless programme for the group and each morning we were shepherded out to a bus to visit the sights. It is 30 years since I visited the Cistern, the Blue Mosque, Ayasofya and other magic monuments of Istanbul, and it was wonderful to be reminded of just how special it is, with its multilayered history. In the evenings Istanbul friends of Çetin joined us and at dinner I would be seated next to someone so interesting I could have spent a week in conversation with them.

Now it is time to prepare for winter. Three tons of firewood have been delivered and Fatih has stacked it as if each piece is part of a giant jigsaw. The lake recedes further every day, only to return and reach my lawn when the winter snows melt. We have collected the last bean crop for the year and the olive trees have been stripped. The last two winters we have had more snow than usual, so I will stock up on food in case the track through the olive groves becomes impassable. ◆

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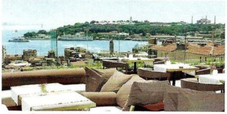

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Domestic goddesses

A tale of two exceptional cooks: one Greek, one Turkish, worlds apart in their ways with food – but with more in common than you'd think. By Roger Norman

I've been lucky with my mothers-in-law, two outstandingly good cooks, one Greek and one Turkish. It would be hard to say who was best. For sheer all-round excellence – soups, salads, vegetable dishes, fry-ups, böreks and buns – you'd have to give it to Fatma, I suppose. But when it comes to particularly delicious specialities – as long as you're not put off by an abundance of olive oil – Stella probably shades it, for her roast beef with little onions or her very plump stuffed tomatoes, still sizzling, browned above, succulent below. She was the more extravagant of the two cooks, as indicated by her instructions for time in the oven. "Leave it for a certain time and then forget it a little," she would say airily, and that forgetting-a-little was indeed indispensable.

Fatma, for her part, forgets nothing, but it all emerges, without haste or fuss, perfect in appearance, tenderness and taste every time. She's neater, more economical, quieter, lacking Stella's tendency to excess, and overall if you wanted someone to cook for you for a lifetime free of obesity and the other pitfalls, you'd choose Fatma – whose meals have the added advantage, medically speaking, of being alcohol-free, whereas Stella's table was never without wine or ouzo or both.

Stella's father was a Thessalian priest and her grandfather a highland shepherd. The roots of the family were said to be Vlach, but none of the present generation know of any Vlach or any family history beyond Thessaly. A small plot of family land has survived in a little village about as high as you can go in the Thessalian hills. The pine forest has taken over this plot, and a length of old stone wall is the only sign of human activity. The highland shepherds wintered on the plain, returning to the hills with their animals in the early spring, and this was the life Stella knew as a child – perhaps not much different from how the Vlachs had lived for centuries in northern Greece or Albania or Macedonia.

Fatma's family were Bulgarian Turks, also farmers, who had left Bulgaria during one of the exoduses in the 1880s. Arriving in mid-Anatolia, they established their own village on the Porsuk river, about 10km from Eskişehir. At the entrance to the village is a striking outcrop of bronze-coloured rock on which the foundation date of the village, 1882, is declared in white paint. It's no more than a scrawl but still a real link with the very beginnings of what is now a large village grown prosperous from the cultivation of pumpkins. Fatma grew up here, in a substantial farmhouse built in rough Ottoman style, with plenty of timber showing and an overhanging first-floor balcony. The most distinctive features of such properties are the tall, heavy, hand-built gates shielding house and garden from the eyes of the world. Most have been repeatedly repaired and patched over the years, but only a few have been replaced by the sheet-iron version (painted a dull anti-rust red) that robs the grand entrances of their charm. Charm? It's a matter of taste, but the old gates, like the scrawl of whitewash on the rock, are a connection with the Bulgarian community that started out here four or five generations ago.

As so often in these regions – Greece, the Balkans, Anatolia – family histories involve many tribes and many places. In Stella's dishes there may be a pinch of Vlach, a hint of highland Thessaly and a generous dollop of today's Aegean cuisine. In Fatma's more varied productions there's a bit of the Balkans, a plentiful serving of Anatolian-Turkish (with its borrowings from the old nomads and the Arab lands), plus whatever has travelled from the Aegean coast – being handy with fish, for example, and recognising good olive oil. There's a lot in common between the two, much of it using the same names with minor differences. *Dolma*, *dolmathes*, *dolmathakia*; *köfte*, *keftetha*, *keftethakia*; *fasulye*, *fassolia*; *bezelye*, *bizelia*.

A traveller from distant lands might be excused for thinking – judged on the cookery alone – that the whole region of Greece, the Balkans, Thrace and Anatolia belongs to a single culture. There is the Ottoman influence, of course, but beyond that? Byzantine? Or are there elements in the land itself – its airs, waters and places – that give rise to common cultural and culinary features? Anyway, who taught what to whom? The Greeks wouldn't want to admit to learning yoghurt from the Turks, and nor, I suspect, would the Turks care to believe they learnt the steps of the *sirto* from the Greeks. Yoghurt is a staple in both Stella's and Fatma's kitchens, and both ladies can dance a sprightly two-step. Stella's *sirto* is like her stuffed tomatoes, bursting with juice. Fatma's *kasap havası* is like her baked anchovies with onions, neither overdone nor underdone, in perfect order. ◆

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

From comfortable old-style charm to unashamed new-wave trendiness, Andrew Finkel goes in search of the feel-good factor

We seek solace in the company of friends but are embarrassed by ostentation. We need taking out of ourselves but are increasingly reluctant to wander far from home. The sadness of arbitrary acts of terror, the frustration at the drip, drip of painful news: if ever a city were in need of comfort food, it is the Istanbul of the here and now.

It was in search of the familiar that I revisited an old Istanbul establishment in the centre of Üsküdar. **Kanaat** is a large, bustling dining room revamped from humbler premises that date from the 1930s, and it serves the food people used to make at home. Vegetables braised in olive oil, milky sweets or rich caramelised *ekmek kadayıfı* are all on open display, as are the trays of steaming main courses. I remembered Kanaat as being tasty but on the heavy side or, as was pointed out to me at the time, "authentically greasy". By now the cooks have obviously reconciled themselves to the taste for leaner food. The choice is vast and everything is good – from a warming bowl of sheep-trotter soup to the stuffed cabbage leaves – which had the additional feel-good factor of being not a million miles from a similar dish my Great-Aunt Rose used to prepare, albeit inspired by a very different culinary tradition. We shared a jellied quince (turning down the usual clotted cream) and there was still enough to pack up to take home.

It must have been 25 years ago that I prepared an article on Kanaat-style *lokanta* food and sought out a place opposite the Süleymaniye Mosque which I remembered for having the very best stewed haricot beans and rice. I was astonished to learn that it too was called Kanaat and had been founded by a breakaway branch of the family. The word means "belief" but also "contentment", in the sense of being satisfied with one's lot.

Were I to write that same article today I would have to add **Lades**, off İstiklâl, which has taken on the mantle of the late, great Hacı Salih – the sacred chapel to Turkish home cuisine in an arcade round the corner. *Lades* means "wishbone" and I had avoided it for years because I mistakenly assumed it was related to the brand of factory-farmed chickens of the same name. While not as sublime as the Hacı Salih of my memory, it has, like Kanaat, a wide array of carefully prepared food. With its starched tablecloths, Lades has a *comme il faut* sensibility – I could have taken my great-aunt to lunch there. But it is far from stuffy. Everyone knows the waiters and you can still choose the food from the kitchen. The baked lamb with *hünkâr beğendi* (aubergine purée) would be a wise selection.

There are more conventional ways to deal with grim times. A new brand of craft bottled beer has popped up on Istanbul shelves called Gara Guzu (presumably the way you would pronounce the Turkish for "Black Lamb" after you've had a few), and it comes in a variety of forms, all of them hoppy: amber, pale, IPA and a very attractive red ale (7% vol) that takes its colour from beets and has a honey and apple aroma. Istanbul has a modest tradition of well-made beer, dating from the Swiss Bomonti brothers, who lent their name to a district of the city where they established their famous brewery. The mustard-coloured buildings with Bavarian turrets had lain derelict since 1991, but have been brought back to life as an arts-concert-culinary complex called Bomontiada (Bomonti Island), which really is a bolthole in an overgrown part of the city. The Babylon music club has moved here and so has a microbrewery providing the tipple for **The Populist** – an American-style eatery that has slow-cooked brisket and even *kokoreç* (lamb's intestines) pizza – but the beer's the thing, including a Cologne pilsner and a tonka-bean stout.

Sahrap Pera is in the new, modern meze "invented tradition" and very much a restaurant for our times. It is at the Tünel end of Beyoğlu, a neighbourhood once crowded with *meyhane* drinking dens. Sahrap is to the *meyhane* what an upscale gastropub is to the Frog and Firkin, although to be fair, the cheerfully elegant dining room with a high atrium ceiling doesn't really feel like a *meyhane*. The food, meant to be a compendium of Anatolian dishes, is compiled by celebrity chef Sahrap Soysal and is careful without being over-elaborate. Indeed the bulgur and walnut "*köfte*" from Antioch, though cleverly seasoned, was clearly shaped with an ice-cream scoop. A sliver of *lakerda*, brined bonito, on a bruschetta covered with crispy fried onions was not a great improvement on a good piece of *lakerda* all on its own, but as the hot meze arrived the food became far more exciting. There was good octopus, and fried brain served like a croquettes with a spicy sauce. Main courses – appealing and not over-expensive – included pulled veal cheek on a bed of celeriac-infused mashed potato. Our party of six rugged individuals all went home with a sense of *kanaat*.

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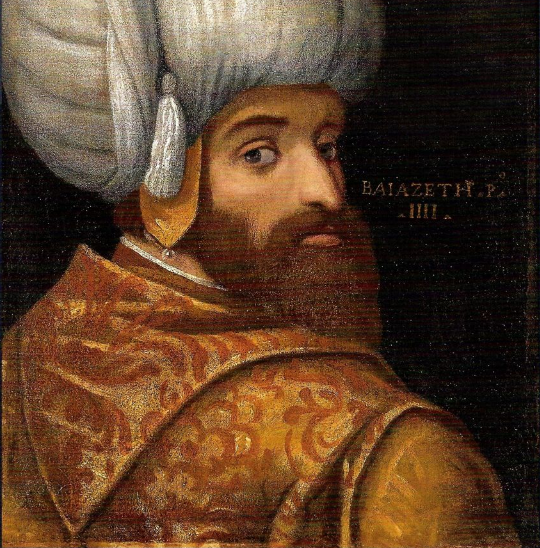

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